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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE UKRAINIAN TSYMBALY: HAMMERED DULCIMER PLAYING AMONG UKRAINIANS IN ALBERTA

BY

BRIAN ANTHONY CHERWICK

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS.

IN

UKRAINIAN FOLKLORE

DEPARTMENT OF SLAVIC AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1992

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ISBN 0-315-77056-2

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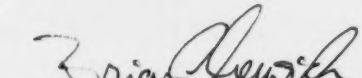

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE UKRAINIAN TSYMBALY: HAMMERED DULCIMER PLAYING AMONG UKRAINIANS IN ALBERTA submitted by BRIAN ANTHONY CHERWICK in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS in UKRAINIAN FOKLORE.

Dr. B. Medwidsky

Dr. R. Quereshi

Dr. A. Nahachewsky

October 8, 1992

To Beth.

ABSTRACT

Tsymbaly [hammered dulcimer] have been played by Ukrainians in Alberta for almost one hundred years. Music featuring tsymbaly has been an integral component of community events such as religious feast days, weddings, and local dances and parties. During that time, the instrument has taken on a more prominent role in folk musical ensembles. Through case studies of three generations of Alberta tsymbalists an overview of diachronic change in this tradition can be established. Details of instrument construction and tuning systems, technique, repertoire and contemporary performance contexts combine to illustrate the current status of this rich tradition.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank my parents for their support, for instilling in me a love for Ukrainian music, and for taking me along to weddings filled with the sound of tsymbaly. Thank you to the members of my Committee: Dr. Regula Quereshi and Dr. Andriy Nahachewsky for their suggestions and assistance, with an added thank you to Dr. Nahachewsky for the many hours he spent helping to edit this work. A very special thank you to my advisor, Dr. Bohdan Medwidsky, for his foresight and encouragement throughout this entire project. Thank you to Dr. Robert Klymasz of the Canadian Museum of Civilization for making his fieldwork recordings available to me. A special thank you to all my informants, most notably Nick Mischi, Bill Malayko, Albert (Al) Billey, Albert Billey, Steven Chwok and Chris Gargus for sharing their passion, ideas and talents. I thank the Province of Alberta, the Department of Slavic and East European Studies, St. John's Institute, and the Cardinal Josyf Slipyj Ukrainian Scholarship Society for their support. Finally, I would like to thank my wife, Beth, for all her inspiration, patience, understanding and love.

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NOTES ABOUT MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Letter names of pitches presented in texts and in charts are indicated according to the Helmholtz system of notation.

Letter names of pitches are presented as they are referred to by the informants, for example, Eb rather than D#, or F# rather than Gb. For this reason, enharmonic tones are not presented in Figures 1, 2a and 2b.

All musical transcriptions should be read 8va basso. Examples have been transposed at the octave in order to present melodic material on a single staff. One exception is Figure 2b: "Tuning Systems in Alberta," which presents notes at their actual pitch.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The sound of the Ukrainian *tsymbaly* has been a fixture on the Canadian prairies for almost one hundred years. This sound is familiar to many who have attended Ukrainian dances, festivals and weddings, where the presence of tsymbaly is almost obligatory.[1] Yet, despite its popularity among Ukrainians, the tsymbaly is relatively unknown in other musical circles, and little has been written about it.

My personal interest in tsymbaly performance has developed on various levels, and my goals in pursuing this research were three-fold. As a musician and tsymbaly performer, I saw an opportunity to broaden my own knowledge, while at the same time collecting information that could be shared with audiences and with fellow members of the tsymbaly community. As an educator, I wanted to collect and document examples of tsymbaly music which were once typical but are played less frequently today, and which could be shared with future generations of tsymbalists. And as an ethnographer I wanted to explore the contexts in which tsymbaly performances are found and examine their significance within the Ukrainian community of Alberta.

Some suggestions had been made that the tsymbaly has evolved from providing simple harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment for the violin and other instruments to a new position as "lead" instrument in Ukrainian ensembles.[2] Although I did not agree with the premise that the melodic

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[1]Robert B. Klymasz, "'Sounds You Never Before Heard:' Ukrainian Country Music in Western Canada," Ethnomusicology 16, no. 3 (1972), pp. 372-380.

[2]Mark Jaroslav Bandera, The Tsymbaly Maker and His Craft: The Ukrainian Hammered Dulcimer in Alberta, Canadian Series in Ukrainian Ethnology 1 (Edmonton: Huculak Chair of Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography and Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1991), pp.12-13.

capabilities of the tsymbaly are only recently being established, I did agree with the fact that the instrument was taking on a new role. What was once an ubiquitous and essential component of Ukrainian music-making in western Canada was now either nonexistent in many bands, or was assuming an extra-significant status in others. At the same time, the music being performed on this instrument was becoming increasingly more monophonic.

1.2 Method

In order to develop a picture of tsymbaly playing in Alberta I decided to focus upon a small cross-section of musicians who were considered to be superior tsymbaly performers. It was my belief that because of their superior abilities, these performers would have had a wider range of performance experiences and consequently a larger repertoire of pieces. In order to determine which musicians were at the top of this field I consulted individuals in the Ukrainian broadcasting and recording industries, other Ukrainian musicians, and members of the Ukrainian community at large.

Although many tsymbalists were suggested to me, I narrowed the scope of my study to six subjects. There appeared to be three distinct generations of established tsymbalists in Alberta, and I decided to select two examples from each. It was my belief that this approach would provide a representative view of tsymbaly activity over the past seventy years, as well as illustrating diachronic changes in repertoire and performance practice as affected by each generation of performers.

The most important sources of information for this study have been personal interviews with musicians, more specifically, with tsymbaly performers in Edmonton and east central Alberta. Observations of characteristic performance techniques and examples of actual repertoire performed have been notated in order to draw comparisons and contrasts. Descriptions of performance contexts, as perceived by the musicians, were also discussed during these interviews. In some cases I was able to observe these musicians in actual performance contexts at dances, festivals and contests.

In order to compare present day contexts with the past, I decided to create a composite of each event as it may have existed in Alberta, based on available sources. Although the information does not always reflect a single specific time period, it gives a sense of the kinds of contexts where tsymbaly performances could have been encountered and a model against which contemporary situations could be compared.

When conducting this research I had the opportunity to act as both outsider and insider in the tsymbaly community. Because I was relatively new to Alberta, my informants knew nothing about me except that I was conducting research for a university project. As our conversations progressed, I offered more information regarding my own experience as a tsymbaly performer, after which, the informants often became more open with their information.

1.3 Review of Research in the Field

Music has played an important role among Ukrainians in western Canada. Although many studies have dealt with the life of people in

Ukrainian communities in general, there have been very few studies dealing specifically with their musical life.

A picture of the social environment of Ukrainian communities in western Canada can be established through examination of primary source material devoted to this topic. Many early pioneers wrote detailed accounts of their reminiscences regarding emigration to Canada and the establishment of communities in their new homeland. Descriptions of social events often focus on weddings and dances, which occasionally address the role of musicians in such events.[3] Later generations of writers compiled secondary histories based on the works of the original settlers, which often present a similar view.[4]

The earliest work in the field of Ukrainian folk music in Canada was done by Tatiana Koshetz in the 1940s. Mrs. Koshetz, wife of famous Ukrainian composer Oleksander Koshetz, collected and prepared transcriptions of folk songs sung by Ukrainian Canadians.[5] In the 1950s,

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[3] Leonid Bilets'kyi, Ukrains'ki pionery v Kanadi, 1891-1951 [Ukrainian pioneers in Canada] (Winnipeg: Ukrainian Canadian Committee, 1951); Vasyl' Chumer. Spomyny pro perezhyvannia pershykh Ukrains'kykh pereselentsiv v Kanadi [Memories of the experiences of the first Ukrainian settlers in Canada] (Edmonton: 1942); Fylymon Leskiv, Pioners'ke zhyttia v Kanadi [Pioneer life in Canada] (n.p., 1953); Toma Kobzei, Na ternystykh ta khreshchatykh dorohakh: Spomyny z pivstorichchia v Kanadi, tom 1 [Along thorny and knotty roads: Memories from half a century in Canada, vol. 1] (Scranton, PA: Narodna Volya, 1972).

[4] Vladimir J. Kaye, Early Ukrainian settlements in Canada, 1895-1900 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964); Zonia Keywan, Greater Than Kings (Montreal: Harvest House, 1977); J.G. MacGregor, Vilni Zemli (Free Lands) (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1969); John Andrew Sawkey, Those Were The Days: The History of MacNutt, Calder, Dropmore and the Surrounding Districts (n.p., 1972); Julian Stechishin, Istoria poselennia ukraintsiv v Kanadi [History of the settlement of Ukrainians in Canada] (Edmonton: Ukrainian Self-reliance League, 1975); Ol'ha Woycenko, The Ukrainians in Canada (Ottawa: Trident Press, 1968).

[5] Kenneth Peacock, A Survey of Ethnic Folkmusic Across Western Canada (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1963), pp 11-12. Peacock notes over 200 folk song texts and melodies in Mrs. Koshetz's collection, which is stored in the archives of the Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre (Oseredok) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, with

Dr. Jaroslaw Rudnyc'kyj of the University of Manitoba also collected folklore material, including folk songs. His studies focused chiefly on the texts of these songs rather than their musical content.[6]

The greatest body of work dealing with the folklore of Ukrainians in Canada has been produced by Dr. Robert B. Klymasz, who has dealt with folk music in many of his works. His doctoral dissertation Ukrainian Folklore in Canada: An Immigrant Complex in Transition includes chapters focusing on Ukrainian country and western music and Ukrainian festivals.[7] Each makes some reference to the use of instruments, including tsymbaly. His studies, An Introduction to the Ukrainian-Canadian Folksong Cycle and The Ukrainian Winter Folksong Cycle in Canada both take in-depth looks at Ukrainian musical traditions.[8] He has written many articles and presented conference papers which touch upon musical themes such as the musical activity connected with Ukrainian festivals and the Ukrainian recording industry in North America. He does not, however, directly address any questions dealing specifically with Ukrainian instrumental music.[9] In fact, his Bibliography of Ukrainian Folklore in Canada, 1902-64

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copies and accompanying recorded examples stored at the National Museum of Civilization in Ottawa.

[6] Ibid., p. 11. Peacock notes that Rudnyc'kyj's chief interests were the study of literature and linguistics.

[7] Robert B. Klymasz, Ukrainian Folklore in Canada: An Immigrant Complex in Transition (New York: Arno Press, 1980).

[8] Robert B. Klymasz, An Introduction to the Ukrainian-Canadian Folksong Cycle. National Museums of Canada, Bulletin No. 234, Folklore Series No. 8. (Ottawa, 1970); The Ukrainian Winter Folksong Cycle in Canada. Musical transcriptions by Kenneth Peacock. National Museum of Canada, Bulletin No. 236, Folklore Series No. 9. (Ottawa, 1970).

[9] "The Ethnic Folk Festival in North America Today," in Ukraintsi v amerykans'komu ta kanads'komu suspil'stvakh [Ukrainians in American and Canadian societies], ed. Wsevolod Isajiw (Jersey City: M.P. Kotts, 1976), pp. 199-211; "Folk Music," in Visible Symbols: Cultural Expression Among Canada's Ukrainians, ed. Manoly R. Lupul (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1984), pp. 49-56; "The

lists only one entry under the heading "Folksong and Folk Music: Instrumental."[10] Much of Klymasz's work is based on fieldwork recordings made in 1963-65. Among these recordings are a number of interviews with tsymbaly performers and examples of their playing which are useful for comparison to present day performers.[11]

The most in-depth study of the tsymbaly tradition in Canada is Mark Bandera's The Tsymbaly Maker and His Craft. Although essentially an overview of the tsymbaly building tradition in Alberta, he does make some references to tsymbaly playing. He looks at performance with more detail in his article "Tysmbaly Contest at the Red Barn: The Western Canadian Championship."[12] In both studies he describes the contexts in which tsymbaly are encountered, discussing some specific musical aspects in the latter.

Other valuable sources of primary information about Ukrainian folk music in Canada are the articles found in local community history books.

Role of Folk Music," in Continuity and Change: The Cultural Life of Alberta's First Ukrainians, ed. Manoly R. Lupul (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988), pp 167-173; "Sounds You Never Before Heard," pp. 372-80.; "Ukrainian-American Fiddle and Dance Music [review]," Ethnomusicology 23 (1979), pp. 485-486.

10 Klymasz, A Bibliography of Ukrainian Folklore in Canada, 1902-64, (Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, 1964). The sole entry under the heading "Folksong and folk music: Instrumental" is a 1960 article by Jaroslav Rudnyc'kyj entitled "Toma Bilous. Ostannij narodnyj sopilkar u Kanadi. (Thomas Bilous. Ukrainian Canadian Flute Player.)"

11 KLY 20 c. 1-a, Mr. Eugen Gallets, Grandview, MB; KLY 32, c. 13-a, Track 1 and 2, Peter Moroz, Peter Musij, Bill Frykas, Gilbert Plains, MB; KLY 32, c. 13-b, Track 1 and 2, Elix Yurij, Bill Yurij, Shortdale, MB; KLY 35, c. 16-a, Track 1 and 2, Bill Grysiuk, Gilbert Plains, MB; KLY 39, c. 20-b, Track 1, Alfred Frykas, Mink Creek , MB; KLY 39, c. 20-b, Track 2, Joe Deyholos and son Ted; KLY 39, c. 20-c, Track 1, Peter Leskiw.These recordings are listed in The Klymasz Collection (Ottawa, 1969), and are stored at the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, Quebec.

12 Mark Jaroslav Bandera. "The Western Canadian Championships: Tsymbaly Competitions at the Red Barn." Canadian Folk Music Journal 11 (1983), pp. 28-33.

In conjunction with the Province of Alberta's 75th anniversary, many towns and municipalities prepared books depicting the establishment and development of their communities.[13] These books often include descriptions of local government, schools, businesses and organizations, as well as submissions by citizens outlining their family histories. As with the previously mentioned pioneer reminiscences, these articles often describe events such as church holidays, weddings, anniversaries and community dances. Writers whose families included musicians often included descriptions of their musical activities. Many articles are accompanied by photographs, which sometimes offer more information than the written descriptions themselves.

Perhaps the most complete database for tsymbaly performance practice in Canada can be found in numerous commercial sound recordings featuring tsymbaly performers. Recordings of this nature have been produced in Canada since the 1940s.[14] Examination of the role played by tsymbaly in the various recorded ensembles can provide an accurate picture of the development of the tsymbaly's role within the Canadian context.

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[13] For example: Dreams and Destinies: Andrew and District (Andrew: Andrew Historical Society, 1980); Lamont and Districts: Along the Victoria Trail, ed. Elizabeth Carlsson and Irene Stainton (Edmonton: Lamont and District Historian, 1978); Memories of Mundare: A History of Mundare and Districts (Mundare: Mundare Historical Society, 1980); Our Legacy: History of Smoky Lake and District (Smoky Lake and District Cultural and Heritage Society, 1983); A Patchwork of Memories (Thorsby: The Historical Society of Thorsby and District, 1979); Pride in Progress: Chipman - St. Michael - Star and Districts (Chipman: Alberta Rose Historical Society, 1982); Reflections: A History of Elk Point, ed. Mary Bennett (Elk Point: Elk Point and District Historical Society, 1977); Vegreville in Review: History of Vegreville and Surrounding Area 1880-1980, vol. 2 (Vegreville: Vegreville and District Historical Society, 1980).

[14] Early 78 R.P.M. recordings were produced in Canada on the Quality, Stinson, D.S.F. and Regis record labels. Long-playing albums have been produced since the 1960s on the V, UK, Galaxy, New Era, Heritage, Maple Haze, Sunshine, and Baba's Record labels, as well as several albums produced independently by musicians. Many of these recordings feature ensembles which include tsymbaly.

In order to establish guidelines for discussion of a Canadian tsymbaly tradition, it is necessary to look at the tradition as it existed in Ukraine. Studies dating from the 19th and early 20th centuries are most substantial. Physical descriptions of the instrument and brief discussion of performance practices can be found in general surveys of musical instruments such as Narodni muzychni instrumenty na Ukraini [Folk musical instruments in Ukraine] by Mykola Lysenko[15], Muzychni instrumenty ukrains'koho narodu [Musical instruments of the Ukrainian people] by Hnat Khotkevych[16], and Ukrains'ki narodni muzychni instrumenty [Ukrainian folk musical instruments] by Andrii Humeniuk,[17] or Atlas muzykal'nykh instrumentov narodov S.S.S.R [Atlas of musical instruments of the people of the U.S.S.R.][18] Regional ethnomusicological or ethnographic surveys such as Stanislaw Mierczynsky's Muzyka Huculszczyny [Music of the Hutsul region][19] or Volodymyr Shukhevych's "Hutsul'ski strumenty" [Hutsul instruments] in Hutsul'shchyna [Hutsul region][20] also provide descriptions

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[15] Mykola Lysenko, Narodni muzychni instrumenty na Ukraini [Folk musical instruments in Ukraine] (Kyiv: Mystetstvo, 1950).This work was originally published as a series of articles in the journal Zoria nos. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 in L'viv, 1894, under the pseudonym "Boian."

[16] Hnat Khotkevych, Muzychni instrumenty ukrains'koho narodu [Musical instruments of the Ukrainian people] (Kharkiv: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo Ukrainy, 1929).

[17] A. Humeniuk,. Ukrains'ki narodni muzychni instrumenty [Ukrainian folk musical instruments] (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1967).

[18] K. Vertkov, G. Blagodatov, and E. Yazovytskaia. Atlas muzykal'nykh instrumentov narodov S.S.S.R [Atlas of musical instruments of the people of the U.S.S.R.], 1st edition (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoie muzykal'noie izdatel'stvo, 1963); 2nd edition (Moscow: Muzyka, 1975.)

[19] Stanislaw Mierczynski, Muzyka Huculszczyzny [Music of the Hutsul region] (Cracow: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1965).

[20] Volodymyr Shukhevych, "Hutsul'ski strumenty" [Hutsul instruments], in Hutsul'shchyna [The Hutsul region], part 3, in Materialy do Ukrains'ko-rus'koi etnol'ogii 5 (L'viv: Naukove tovarystvo im. Shevchenka, 1902).

of the role of tsymbaly, the former complete with detailed musical transcriptions.

Some contemporary Soviet publications also discuss modern developments regarding tsymbaly. The journal Narodna tvorchist' ta etnohrafiia [Folk creativity and ethnography] has featured articles by Mykhailo Lysenko[21], Vitalii Roi[22] and I. K. Shramko[23] dealing with the design and playing of tsymbaly. Both Oleksander Nezovybat'ko[24] and Dmytro Popichuk[25] have developed instructional methods for tsymbaly. Several works discuss contemporary contexts in which tsymbaly can be encountered.[26]These studies can all be useful in comparing development of tsymbaly tradition in present day Ukraine to that in Canada.

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[21] Mykhailo Lysenko, "Tsymbaly," Narodna tvorchist' ta etnohrafiia [Folk creativity and ethnology], no. 5, 1968, pp. 54-55.

[22] Vitalii Roi, "Novyi strii tsymbaliv" [New tuning of tsymbaly] Narodna tvorchist' ta etnohrafiia, no. 5, 1978, pp. 55-57.

[23] I.K. Shramko, "Ukrains'ki tsymbaly" [Ukrainian tsymbaly], Narodna tvorchist' ta etnohrafiia, no. 4, 1989, pp. 13-22.

[24] Oleksander Nezovybat'ko, Shkola hry na ukrains'kykh tsymbalakh [Method for playing the Ukrainian tsymbaly] (Kyiv: Mystetstvo, 1966).

[25] D. Popichuk, Kontsertni tvory dlia tsymbal i fortepiano [Concert pieces for tsymbaly and piano] (Kyiv: Muzychna Ukraina, 1981); Tsymbaly: 1 vypusk uchbovyi repertuar I-II kursiv muzychnykh uchylyshch [Tsymbaly: 1st edition of instructional repertoire for 1st and 2nd courses in musical teaching institutions] (Kyiv: Muzychna Ukraina, 1987); Tsymbaly: 1-3 klasy dytiachoi muzychnoi shkoly [Tsymbaly: For 1-3 classes of children's musical school] (Kyiv: Muzychna Ukraina, 1984); Tsymbaly: 4-5 klasy dytiachoi muzychnoi shkoly [Tsymbaly: For 4-5 classes of children's musical school] (Kyiv: Muzychna Ukraina, 1985).

[26] A.I. Humeniuk, Instrumental'na muzyka [Instrumental music] (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1972); Viktor Hutsal, Hraie orkestr ukrains'kykh narodnykh instrumentiv [The orchestra of Ukrainian folk instruments plays], Raiduha 11 (Kyiv: Mystetstvo, 1978); B.I. Iaremko, "Narodni muzychni instrumenty" [Folk musical instruments], in Hutsul'shchyna: istoryko-etnohrafichne doslidzhennia [Hutsul region: historical-ethnographic research], ed. Iu. H. Hoshko (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1987), pp. 346-353; P. H. Ivanov, Orkestr ukrains'kykh narodnykh instrumentiv [Orchestra of Ukrainian folk instruments] (Kyiv: Muzychna Ukraina, 1981); I.V. Matsievs'kyi, "Muzychnyi fol'klor" [Musical folklore], in Hutsul'schyna: istoryko-etnohrafichne doslidzhennia [Hutsul region: historical-ethnografic research], ed. Iu. H. Hoshko. (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1987), pp. 343-346.

Another area of research which is useful for comparison to the Ukrainian situation in Canada is the development of hammered dulcimer traditions among other cultures. Dulcimers exist in various forms in cultures throughout Asia and Europe, and among immigrant groups in North America. It is useful to note processes in other North American communities, such as the influence of music from outside the group's tradition or the changing role of an instrument within that tradition, to compare similar processes among Ukrainians in Alberta.[27]

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[27] See Chapter 3.3, "Hammered dulcimer in other countries," and Chapter 3.4, "Hammered dulcimer in North America."

CHAPTER TWO: CONTEXTS

2.1 Khram

For many of the Ukrainian settlements in Western Canada, a centre of community activity was the local church.[1] Consequently, church related functions provided the environment for social interaction. One such church-related event was the *khram* or *praznyk*.

The *khram* is a yearly celebration held to commemorate the feast day of a church's patron saint. Many religious holidays named after saints were strictly observed and often considered as important as the Sabbath.[2] The *khram* was observed with a special church service, followed by a festive meal.[3] People from neighbouring communities often travelled to take part in these celebrations.[4]

After the commemorative service, the tone of the holiday was much less solemn. Members of the parish would invite guests to their homes for "a meal and merry making with eating, drinking, singing and even dancing."[5] Occasionally the festivities would continue on for three days, as was the fashion for wedding celebrations.[6] Some Ukrainians recall:

> ". . . guests would meet at a particular home and remain there for about three days, sleeping in the hayloft of whatever they found a place. A pig

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[1] Other centres of activity included the community halls or *narodni domy*, such as described by Andrij Makuch in "Narodni Domy in East Central Alberta," in Continuity and Change: The Cultural Life of Alberta's First Ukrainians, ed. Manoly R. Lupul (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988), pp. 202-210.

[2] Steve Pitz, "Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church," in Those Were The Days: The History of MacNutt, Calder, Dropmore and the Surrounding Districts "Pioneer to Present, ed. John Andrew Sawkey (n.p., 1972), p. 197.

[3] Mary Ratsoy, "Holiday Celebrations," in Our Legacy: History of Smoky Lake and District (Smoky Lake: Smoky Lake and District Cultural and Heritage Society, 1983), p. 33.

[4] Mary Ratsoy, "Life Within the Town in the Early Days," in Our Legacy, p. 56.

[5] Mary Ratsoy,. "Holiday Celebrations," in Our Legacy, p. 33.

[6] Mary Ratsoy,. "Life Within the Town in the Early Days," in Our Legacy, p. 56.

would be roasted and many Ukrainian dishes prepared. 'Moonshine' was also plentiful (that was before the police had rapid modes of transportation.) Celebrations continued until there was no more food. Local talent teamed up to provide the music which people danced to either indoors or on constructed platforms outdoors."[7]

In some cases, guests would leave one party early in order to make the rounds of other *khram* celebrations in the area.[8] In some parishes, the *khram* was celebrated with picnics, bazaars or dances held near the church or community hall.[9] These celebrations also served as fundraising events for the community.[10]

For many Ukrainians, the *khram* ranked along with weddings as the most notable social events in the community.[11] These celebrations were also noted by musicians as important performance venues.[12]

2.2 House Parties

One of the common social events in the villages of Ukraine were the evening parties or *vechernytsi*. This form of socializing was carried over to the Ukrainian settlements of east central Alberta.

House parties could be held whenever anyone decided to call one, and wherever there was enough room to accommodate a crowd.

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7 Steve Pitz, "Saint Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church," in Sawkey, p. 197.
8 "The Kishpan Family," in Dreams and Destinies: Andrew and District (Andrew: Andrew Historical Society, 1980), p. 395.
9 Walter Maryka, "Do You Remember When?" in A Patchwork of Memories (Thorsby: The Historical Society of Thorsby and District, 1979), p. 833.
10 "Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church of St. John the Baptist of Thorsby," in Patchwork of Memories, p. 143.
11 Alex and Helen Cholak, "Cholak, Wasyl and Elena," in Dreams and Destinies, pp. 306; "Dmytro Decore Family," in Dreams and Destinies, pp. 314-315; P.W. Huculak, "Huculak, Wasyl and Maria," in Dreams and Destinies, p. 376; Irene Kramar, "Swab Family," in Dreams and Destinies, p. 547.
12 "Malayko, William and Sophie," in Dreams and Destinies, p. 445; "Wostok Musicians," in Dreams and Destinies, pp. 257.

Occasionally, surprise parties were held to relieve the monotony of daily work. Guests of all ages were welcome to join in the festivities.[13]

Often, parties were held on Sunday afternoons and other holidays, following the local church service.[14] In these cases the hosts would serve a lunch in the late afternoon, after which some guests would leave to tend to farm chores while others stayed behind to talk, play cards or dance.[15] These parties often mirrored the celebratory nature of the *khram*, as one participant noted:

> "After church service neighbours would meet at the home of some homesteader and to dance to the music of a violin and dulcimer they would dance on the green grass wherever a meadow was available."[16]

Music was the focal point of most house parties.[17] Guests enjoyed singing and dancing to music provided by local musicians.[18] One of the most common configurations of musicians for this type of dance was the previously mentioned violin and tsymbaly duo,[19] although any available instruments would suffice. These parties would also last until "the wee hours of the morning."[20]

Now and then house dances were held to celebrate the construction of a new building, such as a house or barn.[21] Homesteads that consisted of

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13 "Primrose," in Reminiscing in Ferguson Flats, 1900-1974 (Ferguson Flats Ladies' Club, 1974).

14 Mary Ratsoy, "Holiday Celebrations," in Our Legacy, p. 35.

15 Ibid.

16 George Kolotyluk, "Stefan and Maria Kolotyluk," in Our Legacy, p. 526.

17 "Primrose," in Reminiscing.

18 Ibid.; Jack Ruff, "The Growth of Thorsby," in Patchwork of Memories, p. 113.

19 Dr. William Pawluk, "Philip Pawluk - A Free Spirit," in Lamont and Districts: Along the Victoria Trail, ed. Elizabeth Carlsson and Irene Stainton (Edmonton: Lamont and District Historian, 1978), p. 340; Mary Ratsoy. "Holiday Celebrations," in Our Legacy, p. 35.

20 "Primrose," in Reminiscing.

21 Mary Kobeluck, "Mr. and Mrs. Metro Kobeluck," in Patchwork of Memories, p. 248.

both an older and newer house were often preferred locations for dances, providing the dancers with a separate building to themselves.[22]

At times, dancing was not the only focus of a house party. During the depression years the "beer party" was also a popular event. However, this type of party also invariably included a dance.[23] Some other parties, "served homebrew and when the boys got high they used their energy fighting over some girl."[24]

2.3 Community Dances

As rural Alberta communities developed, the community dance offered musicians another possible opportunity for performance. These opportunities increased as the number of community halls also increased. Some these halls were converted old stores or school houses, run by private individuals. For example, Trefony Ewasiuk purchased an old store building in the Sheskowicz District and moved it near the school yard in the Czahar District to serve as a community hall.[25] In 1931, John Topolnitsky bought Chernowci School and converted it to a dance hall, the first in the Wostok District. Prior to that dances in this district had been held in private homes.[26] In the Sniatyn School District an old house on the Olyksandruk homestead had its interior partitions removed and was transformed into "Baba's Hall."[27]

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22 Mary Ratsoy, "Holiday Celebrations," in Our Legacy, p. 35.
23 Pawluk, in Lamont, p. 340.
24 Mary Ratsoy, "Holiday Celebrations," in Our Legacy, p. 35.
25 "Czahar District," in Dreams and Destinies, p. 203.
26 Victoria Zane, "Topolnitsky, John and Lena," in Dreams and Destinies, p. 589.
27 Pearl Malayko, "Sniatyn School District #1605," in Dreams and Destinies, p. 238.

Often dances continued to coincide with religious or community holidays. In July, 1921, the grand opening dance for the Ukrainian National Hall in Smoky Lake was scheduled to coincide with the feast of Saints Peter and Paul.[28] Other common occasions included Valentine's Day,[29] Easter, [30] and dances known as *Pushchenia*, held before lenten seasons prior to Christmas and Easter.[31] Dances were also staged as fundraising events for schools and community organizations.[32] A common variant of the fundraising dance was a basket or pie social.[33] Girls brought lunches which were then auctioned off. A girl shared her lunch with the highest bidder.[34]

Some dances were held for no specific reason. The tradition of Sunday afternoon socializing following church service continued into the era of the community hall. Some halls, like the Ukrainian National Hall in Smoky Lake were used for dances every Sunday.[35] At such functions the most common sound consisted of "the lively music of the fiddle and the dulcimer."[36]

There appear to be no restrictions on the length of these dances. Often, "the patrons never thought of leaving the premises till the sun made

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[28] Bill Ratsoy, "Ukrainian National Hall: Ukrainian Educational Association of Taras Shewchenko, Smoky Lake, Alberta," in Our Legacy, p. 237.

[29] Olga Hackman, "Ladies Aid Of Wostok Community," in Dreams and Destinies, pp. 255-256.

[30] "Sachava District," in Dreams and Destinies, p. 226.

[31] Bill Ratsoy, in Our Legacy, p. 238.

[32] "Czahar School District #2322," in Dreams and Destinies, p. 202.

[33] S. Farus, "Zhoda School," in Dreams and Destinies, p. 266.

[34] Steve Kashuba, "Kashuba, Nichola and Barbara," in Pride in Progress: Chipman - St. Michael - Star and Districts (Chipman, 1982), pp. 436-438.

[35] Bill Ratsoy, in Our Legacy, p. 235.

[36] Helen Kulka, "Chetalna," in Our Legacy, pp. 239.

its first appearance above the eastern horizon."[37] In some cases the festivities occasionally had to be cut short due to disruptions such as fist fights.[38] Usually, however, a calmer atmosphere prevailed, as babies were even set to sleep on the stage near the musicians while their parents danced.[39] An overall sense of community etiquette maintained order at these events, as is evidenced by the following rules posted at Smoky Lake Ukrainian National Hall in 1921:

1. No hats or caps worn during dancing.
2. No smoking in the presence of women.
3. No dancing with cigarettes in your mouth.
4. No spitting on the floor at any time.
5. Girls under 15 years of age not to be present at any dance unless accompanied by parents.[40]

Overall, the community dances provided numerous opportunities for local musicians to perform.

2.4 Weddings

Perhaps the most celebrated social event among Ukrainians is the wedding. Weddings provided local musicians with the greatest opportunity to perform and receive payment for their services.[41] Sometimes this payment was in the form of cash,[42] while at other times the musicians were

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[37] Pearl Malayko, in Dreams and Destinies, p. 239.

[38] Harry Pichonsky, "Harry and Maxine Pichonsky and Family," in Patchwork of Memories, p. 479.

[39] A. Goroniuk, "Cadron," in Dreams and Destinies, p. 193.

[40] Bill Ratsoy, in Our Legacy, p. 237.

[41] Anthony Savich, "John Savich Family," in Memories of Mundare: A History of Mundare and Districts (Mundare, 1980), pp. 457-459.

[42] Walter Gargus, "Gargus, Walter and Jennie," in Dreams and Destinies, pp. 347. This musician recalls performing at weddings, with his band earning $12.00 per wedding in the 1930s, $25.00 - $40.00 in the 1940s, and $300.00 - $400.00 in 1979.

paid with livestock,[43] sacks of grain,[44] or with credit towards groceries in the local store.[45]

In Ukraine, the traditional wedding usually extended over several days, filled with ritual, feasting, music and dancing. Weddings often began on a Friday evening with the ceremonial preparation of the ritual wedding bread known as *korovai*, [46] or ceremonial tree known as *derevtse*,[47] and continued on Saturday evening with the preparation of the wedding wreaths or *vinky*.[48]These celebrations were accompanied by groups of musicians known as *muzyky*, who usually remained after the ceremonies to play music for dancing, which could last until the following morning.[49]

The actual marriage ceremonies took place on Sunday, with the musicians playing an important role throughout the day. They were expected to provide music for the ritual blessing of the bride and groom by their parents, play marches as the couple travelled to and from church, and accompany all subsequent activities that took place at the respective homes of each family. Wedding festivities were held simultaneously at the homes of the bride and groom, with separate groups of musicians hired for each location. The weddings could last up to 4 and 5 days, with music and dancing throughout.[50]

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[43]"Mike and Doris Oleksiuk," in Our Legacy, p. 664.

[44] John D. Panych, "Panych, Stefan and Anna," in Pride in Progress, p. 609.

[45] "Malayko, William and Sophie," in Dreams and Destinies, p. 445.

[46] I. Chaban, "Vesillia na Sokal'shchyni," in Vesillia, vol. 2, ed. M.M. Shubravs'ka, (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1970), pp. 131-155.

[47] V. Ravliuk, "Vesillia v seli Orel'tsi Sniatyns'koho povitu na Stanislavshchyni," in Vesillia, vol. 2, p. 184.

[48] Chaban, pp. 184-189; O. Roshkevych and I. Franko, "Obriady i pisni vesil'ni liudu rus'koho v seli Lolyn Striis'koho povitu," in Vesillia, vol. 2, pp.73-79.

[49] O. Roshkevych and I. Franko, pp.73-124.

[50] Chaban; Ravliuk; Roshkevych and Franko.

Ukrainian wedding celebrations in Canada preserved the patterns set in Ukraine. Weddings lasting several days were common, although they began to lose some of their ritual importance.[51] They also provided some of the first social interaction with neighbours from outside the Ukrainian community.[52] Weddings continued to be held at the family homes of the couples being married. In many case, special preparations were made to the home or yard to accommodate the event. Since dancing often took place outdoors, yards were swept clean[53] or special platforms or dance floors were constructed.[54] The dancing sometimes took place in the farmhouses, although this could create crowded and dangerous conditions.[55] Other wedding dances were held in the barn, [56] or in specially constructed "lean-to" shelters.[57]

The tradition of holding weddings at home lasted into the 1950s, when the community hall became the preferred location for such large events,[58] with food preparation assumed by local community organizations.[59]

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[51] Maryka, in Patchwork of Memories, p. 833. Maryka notes that weddings were a three day celebration but believed that the purpose of the first day was "a sort of trial run to sample the food, whiskey and other drinks."

[52] Mrs. Rose Gilhooly, "Arrival of Ukrainians," in Sawkey, pp. 275-276.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Steve D. Panych, "Panych, Steve D. and Kate," in Pride in Progress, pp. 612-613.

[55] Reflections: A History of Elk Point and District, ed. Mary Bennett (Elk Point: Elk Point and District Historical Society, 1977), p. 327. At the Poloway-Maksymec wedding of June 4, 1916, "The dancing wore out the clay-filled wood rail floor, so the next day the floor had to be filled with plaster."

[56] Delores Switlyk, "Paul and Nettie Tancowny," in Patchwork of Memories, p. 924.

[57] Hazel Chernichen, "Metro and Feshka Tancowny," in Patchwork of Memories, p. 923.

[58] "Andrew Hall," in Dreams and Destinies, pp. 134-135.

[59] Stella Hoshowski, "Ukrainian Catholic Women's League," in Patchwork of Memories, p. 145.

Plate 1: John Zelisko Orchestra performing on outdoor platform for wedding in Andrew, Alberta area, circa 1939. Photo courtesy Bill and Pearl Malayko.

CHAPTER THREE: TSYMBALY

3.1 Physical Description

The Ukrainian *tsymbaly* is an instrument which is technically classified as a box zither.[1] Although they are known by several names in various cultures, scholars generally refer to instruments of this type as dulcimers.[2]

The *tsymbaly* consists of a trapeziform box,[3] approximately 93-122 cm. long and 35-50 cm. wide,[4] across which strings are stretched. The wrest-plank [*kovban*] [5] which holds the tuning pins [*kilky dlia natiahuvannia strun*][6] is found on the right hand side of the instrument, and the hitch pins on the left.[7] There are metal bars on either side of the instrument which separate the wrest planks from the sound board [*verkhnia*

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[1] E. M. Hornbostel and C. Sachs, "Classification of Musical Instruments," trans. A. Baines and K. P. Wachmann, in The Galpin Society Journal, no. 14, March, 1961, pp. 13-29.

[2] David Kettlewell, "Dulcimer," in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, vol. 5, ed. Stanley Satie (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1980), pp. 620-621. In order to remove any confusion with the plucked Appalachian dulcimer, instruments that are struck with beaters are often referred to as "hammer" or "hammered" dulcimers. Also see David Kettlewell, "The Dulcimer and Related Instruments." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Loughborough, 1973.

[3] David Kettlewell, "Dulcimer," pp. 620-621.

[4] Stanislaw Mierczynski, Muzyka Huculszczyzny (Cracow: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1965), pp. 150-155.

[5] Mark Jaroslav Bandera, The Tsymbaly Maker and His Craft: The Ukrainian Hammered Dulcimer in Alberta, Canadian Series in Ukrainian Ethnology 1 (Edmonton: Huculak Chair of Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography and Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1991), pp. 59-60.

[6] A. Humeniuk. Ukrains'ki narodni muzychni instrumenty (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1967), p. 109.

[7] John Leach, "The Dulcimer," The Consort 25 (1968-69), p. 390.

doshka],[8] and which define the speaking length of the strings.[9] The sound board may have from two to four sound holes [*holosnyky*].[10]

The strings are grouped into courses or *bunty* [11] consisting of two to six strings tuned in unison. Instruments could have as few as 10 courses of strings[12] or as many as 35.[13] The courses are set in two intersecting horizontal planes,[14] and pass over and under two separate bridges or *kobylky*.[15] The left bridge is placed so that it divides half the courses of strings by the ratio 2:3, enabling each to produce two notes separated by the interval of a perfect fifth.[16] The right bridge carries the remaining courses undivided. The strings are metal, often made of thin brass.[17]

The *tsymbaly* is played by striking the strings with wooden hammers known as *molotochky*,[18] *palychky*,[19] or *pal'tsiatky*.[20] Occasionally, in order to achieve a more delicate tone quality, the hammers are covered with cloth or felt,[21] or sometimes with soft leather.[22]

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[8] Bandera, Tsymbaly Maker, p. 59.
[9] Leach, p. 390.
[10] O. Nezovybat'ko, Ukrains'ki tsymbaly [Ukrainian tsymbaly] (Kyiv: Muzychna Ukraina, 1976), p.16.
[11] Mykola Lysenko, Narodni muzychni instrumenty na Ukraini (Kyiv: Mystetstvo, 1950), p. 51.
[12] Nezovybat'ko, Ukrains'ki tsymbaly, p.17.
[13] Kettlewell, "Dulcimer," p. 624.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Mykola Lysenko, p. 52.
[16] Nezovybat'ko, Ukrains'ki tsymbaly, p.17.
[17] Mykola Lysenko, p. 54.
[18] Ibid., p. 51.
[19] Humeniuk, Ukrains'ki narodni muzychni instrumenty, p. 105.
[20] Bandera, Tsymbaly Maker, p.60.
[21] Mykola Lysenko, p. 52.
[22] Bandera, Tsymbaly Maker, p. 44.

As with many instruments, there is folklore surrounding the construction of tsymbaly. It is believed that the sides should be constructed of ash, the bottom deck of maple, and the sound board of a fir which has been struck by lightning. The ash has the power to charm serpents, the maple personifies humankind, and the lightning-struck fir is endowed with various powers protecting against illness, evil and representing fertility.[23] Often *tsymbaly* are decorated with magical symbols. The most common of these are sound holes shaped like six-petaled flowers, surrounded by a hexagon. The hexagon is a symbol of wealth, beauty, marriage, love, harmony, peace and reciprocity as well as being connected with the energy of life and the sun.[24]

3.2 History

There is some dispute as to the origin and age of the dulcimer. While some scholars argue that the tablets of Nineveh, dating from 2000 B.C., depict musicians playing dulcimers,[25] others insist that the oldest known depiction of an instrument that is unmistakably a dulcimer is in a 12th-century carved ivory book-cover made in Byzantium for Melissenda of Jerusalem, the wife of Foulques, Count of Anjou.[26] The latter example supports the school of thought that the dulcimer was introduced into western Europe via Byzantium in the 15th century.[27] Another belief is that

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[23] I.K. Shramko, "Ukrains'ki tsymbaly," Narodna tvorchist' ta etnohrafiia, no. 4, 1989, p. 16.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Leach, p. 390.
[26] Kettlewell, "Dulcimer," p. 627.
[27] Ibid.

Plate 2: Six petaled rosette surrounded by hexagon. Sound hole ornament carved from plum tree wood on tsymbaly built by John Maga, Molodia, Bukovyna, 1891. Tsymbaly owned by Mrs. Anne Klapatiuk, Andrew, Alberta. Photo: B. Cherwick

the dulcimer is a descendant of the Assyrian *santyr*, which which made its way from Syria, Palestine and Egypt to western Europe during the time of the Crusades between the 11th and 13th centuries.[28] This belief is supported by an Assyrian bas-relief found in Kuiundzhik which shows a musician striking a stringed instrument with a mallet.[29] Since Kyivan Rus' had contact with both western Europe and the near East, either could have been the source from which *tsymbaly* made their way to the territory of present day Ukraine.[30]

Further evidence of the existence of dulcimer-type instruments in eastern Europe can be found in a Czech manuscript of the Velyslavov Bible dating from the 13th-14th centuries, where a woman is depicted playing with mallets on a trapeziform instrument.[31]

Some scholars insist that the history of *tsymbaly* on the territory of Ukraine is much more ancient. I. K. Shramko reports that a primitive stringed "tsymbal," dating from the 5th or 4th century B.C., was discovered during an archaeological expedition in the Volovets'kyi and Mezhehirs'kyi regions of the Zakarpattia province in 1973.[32]

The earliest evidence of Ukrainian *tsymbaly* in literature can be found in dictionaries and other works from the 17th century. In the 1780s the German writer Rigelmann mentioned the instrument in a discussion of Ukrainian musicians. The French explorer Beauplan described a Ukrainian wedding from the 17th century where the bride was lead to church by

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28 Humeniuk, Ukrains'ki narodni muzychni instrumenty, p. 105.

29 Nezovybat'ko, Ukrains'ki tsymbaly, p. 3; Hnat Khotkevych, Muzychni instrumenty ukrains'koho narodu (Kharkiv: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo Ukrainy, 1929), p. 156.

30 Humeniuk, Ukrains'ki narodni muzychni instrumenty, p. 106.

31 Ibid.

32 Shramko, p. 15.

"skrzypek, dudy i cymbaly" [violin, flute and tsymbaly]. Following a concert tour in the 1850s, pianist Franz Liszt remarked on the widespread use of the instrument among Ukrainians and noted the fact that musicians held the instrument by means of a strap around their neck, allowing them freedom to move about while playing.[33]

The Ukrainian word *tsymbaly* is derived from the Greek name *kimbalom* which means "struck instrument,"[34] which in turn comes from the Indo-European root *kymb* .[35] The latter refers to a pair of metal cups or plates resembling the present day percussive cymbals. It is perhaps because the sound of the early *tsymbaly* was sharp and metallic that it assumed the name of these metallic instruments.[36]

3.3 Hammered dulcimer in other countries

Hammered dulcimer-type instruments can be found throughout most of the world. Though primarily similar in construction and the way in which they are played, these instruments are known by dozens of different names. Most of these names fall into one of six families.[37] The Persian term *santur* and many cognates derived from the Greek *psallo* (to pluck), can be found in Egypt, Georgia, Greece, India and Slovenia.[38] *Psallo* also appears to be the root for names related to the English *psaltery* , such as the Spanish *salterio* , the French *psalterion* and the Italian *psalterio tedesco*,

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[33] Khotkevych, p. 162.
[34] Kettlewell, "Dulcimer," p. 620.
[35] Shramko, p. 13.
[36] Humeniuk, Ukrains'ki narodni muzychni instrumenty, p. 105
[37] Kettlewell, "Dulcimer," p. 620.
[38] Ibid.

which actually means "German psaltery."[39] In Asia most names are variants of the term "foreign zither."[40] In China it is known as the *yang ch'in*, in Korea the *yang kum*, and in Japan, the *san gen da kin*.[41] Two Greek words for a struck instrument have provided two European variants. In eastern Europe *kimbalom* has developed into *cimbalom*, *zimbel* and *tsymbaly* , while in the west *tympanon* is the root for the French *tympanon* , the Spanish *timpano,* and the Italian *timpano* .[42] The German name *hackbrett* literally means "chopping board." Variants of this name are used among Germanic peoples in Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and Switzerland.[43]

The term "dulcimer" comes from the Latin *dulce melos* (sweet sound),[44] and becomes *dulcema* in Spanish, *dolcemela* in Italian, and *doucemelle* or *doulcemer* in French and English.[45]

3.4 Hammered dulcimer in North America

Since the hammered dulcimer was popular throughout Europe, it was inevitable that it make its way to North America. The first mention of a dulcimer in North America was in 1717 by Samuel Sewell of Salem,

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39 Ibid.
40 Sybil Marcuse, A Survey of Musical Instruments (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 223.
41 Ibid.
42 Kettlewell, "Dulcimer," p. 620.
43 Ibid., p. 621.
44 Ibid.
45 Marcuse, p. 223.

Massachusetts.[46] The instrument enjoyed its greatest popularity in the 19th century when its portability made it a practical alternative to the piano.[47]

A clear example of the popularity of this instrument is the fact that around 1900, Sears, Roebuck & Co. and Montgomery Ward & Co. sold mass-produced dulcimers through their mail-order catalogues.[48]

In the 1920s and 30s the hammered dulcimer was brought further into prominence through the efforts of auto maker Henry Ford, who featured the instrument as part of "Henry Ford's Early American Orchestra" which performed at dances and on radio broadcasts.[49] The hammered dulcimer was also popular on the vaudeville stages as played by artists such as Jesse R. Martin.[50]

In recent years the hammered dulcimer has enjoyed a revival.[51] With renewed interest in this instrument, a number of shops and manufacturers have opened across the U.S.[52] The hammered dulcimer enthusiast can choose from a wide range of recordings, instruction books, festivals, camps and even a quarterly journal all focusing on the hammered dulcimer.[53]

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[46] Laurence Libin, American Musical Instruments in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985.), p. 101.

[47] Nancy Groce, The Hammered Dulcimer in North America (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983), pp. 24-25.

[48] Libin, p. 101.

[49] Groce, pp. 36-38, 40.

[50] Ibid., pp. 38-39.

[51] Sam Rizetta, Hammer Dulcimer History and Playing, Smithsonian Institute Leaflet 72-4 (Washington, D.C.).

[52] Henry Rasof, The Folk, Country, and Bluegrass Musician's Catalogue (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), pp. 124-135.

[53] The Dulcimer Players News (Winchester, VA) is a quarterly journal which features articles and music for the hammered dulcimer, reviews of recordings and publications, lists of camps and festivals, and advertisements for instruments, instruction books and other related materials. Also see Evan Stein, comp. The Hammered Dulcimer and Related Instruments: A Bibliography, Archive of Folk Culture (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1979).

3.5 Tsymbaly tradition in Canada

Ukrainian immigration to Canada occurred in three predominant waves: the first and largest beginning in the 1890s and lasting until the First World War; the second, during the inter-war years; and the third following the Second World War. The first two waves of immigration settled primarily on the Canadian Prairies. It is among these communities that the Ukrainian tsymbaly tradition flourished. For these settlers, the tsymbaly helped provide a link to the cultural life of their villages in western Ukraine.

The immigrants of the third wave came from a variety of regions in Ukraine and settled primarily in urban centres. For this group, the tsymbaly held little, if any special significance.

Although there were pockets of tsymbaly activity across the Prairies, the settlement patterns in east central Alberta further encouraged the growth of this tradition.

3.6 Tsymbaly tradition in Alberta

Ukrainian settlement in Alberta began in May of 1894 when four immigrants from the village of Nebyliw in eastern Galicia applied for homesteads on four quarter sections of land approximately thirty-two miles northeast of Edmonton. By the fall of 1896, 300 Ukrainians were homesteading on seventy-five quarter sections in this bloc settlement.[54]

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[54] Orest T. Martynowych, "The Ukrainian Bloc Settlement in East Central Alberta, 1890-1930," in Continuity and Change: The Cultural Life of Alberta's First Ukrainians, ed. Manoly R. Lupul. (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1988), p. 30.

Many of these first settlers arrived with very little knowledge of what kind of life awaited them. Consequently they transported a wide range of material items from the old country. These items most often reflected the practicality of the peasant farmer, and included cooking utensils, foodstuffs, articles for sleeping, furniture, clothing, washing utensils, tools and miscellaneous items such as icons, crosses, jewelry, wax, and fabric.[55] In a few cases these transported possessions included musical instruments, emphasizing their importance as an essential component of community life.[56]

Since tsymbaly are quite large and cumbersome, it is expected that the early pioneers would transport smaller instruments such as the violin.[57] However, there is evidence that some immigrants valued tsymbaly to the extent that they included them among the few possessions they were allowed to bring with them to their new homeland.

One of the earliest pioneer musicians was John Maga who settled in the Wostok, Alberta area in 1898. Among the possessions he transported from his home in Molodia, Bukovyna were a homemade tsymbaly and a

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55 Andriy Nahachewsky, "The First Imprint: The Burdei in the Wilderness," in Continuity and Change, pp. 82-83.

56 "Maga, John and Angeline," in Dreams and Destinies: Andrew and District (Andrew, 1980). pp. 443-444; Anthony Savich, "John Savich Family," in Memories of Mundare: A History of Mundare and District. (Mundare, 1980), pp. 453-455.

57 Andriy Nahachewsky, "First Existence Folk Dance Forms Among Ukrainians In Smoky Lake, Alberta and Swan Plain, Saskatchewan," M.A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1985, p. 50.

violin.[58] This instrument was possibly the first Ukrainian tsymbaly in Alberta.[59]

Another group transporting tsymbaly from Ukraine was the John Savich family who settled in the Mundare, Alberta area in 1911. On their way from Borduliaky, Halychyna to Mundare, they stayed in Edmonton for a few days at which time Savich and his sons played a wedding for the Antoniuk family.[60] Since they gave this performance en route to their new home it can be assumed that they brought instruments with them.

Other groups which included tsymbaly and were noted as the first bands in their new regions were the Yuskow Brothers' Orchestra which performed in the New Kiew district from 1916 to 1928;[61] brothers Mike and Tom Halitsky who performed on violin and tsymbaly and were the earliest group in the Kysylew District;[62] and the John Zelisko Orchestra in the Andrew area.[63] Zelisko was known not only as a violinist and band leader, but also as one of the finest builders of tsymbaly in his area, setting what would eventually become the standard for tsymbaly construction among craftsmen in Alberta.[64] At the same time, he and his band had a

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58 "Maga, John and Angeline," in Dreams and Destinies, pp. 443-444. Maga built this instrument himself in 1891, and later taught his children to play it. Maga's sons went on to become one of the most popular bands in the Wostok district.

59 This instrument is still owned and occasionally played by Maga's daughter, Anne Klapatiuk of Andrew, Alberta.

60 Anthony Savich, in Dreams and Destinies, pp. 453-455.

61 "Yuskow Brothers' Orchestra," in Vegreville in Review: History of Vegreville and Surrounding Area 1880-1980, vol. 2. (Vegreville, 1980), p.975.

62 "Orchestras In Kysylew District," in Dreams and Destinies, pp. 210-211.

63 "John Zelisko," in Dreams and Destinies, pp. 633-634.

64 Bandera, Tsymbaly Maker, pp.41-42.

major influence on subsequent generations of Ukrainian musicians, including tsymbaly performers.[65]

3.7 Present-day tsymbaly tradition in Alberta

The present-day body of Ukrainian tsymbaly performers in Alberta can be divided into three main groups. These groups reflect not only the generation to which their members belong, but also specific performance techniques, repertoire, and the performers' general view of the role tsymbaly.

The first generation consists of performers who are either the children of the first pioneer settlers or who immigrated themselves during the inter-war period. These musicians continue to maintain traditional techniques, repertoire, and performance practices, and often directly influence the subsequent generation of performers either as instructors or as role models. Two performers who are representative of this generation are Bill Malayko who was born near Andrew, Alberta, and Nick Mischi, who immigrated from the village of Shypyntsi, Bukovyna.

The second generation consists of performers who are second generation Canadians. Although they have retained components of the original tsymbaly tradition, they have also done much to define a new role for the instrument. As a result of contact with other musical traditions, they have affected changes in repertoire and style. Two performers who represent this generation are Albert Billey of Edmonton, and Al Billey of Ponoka, Alberta.

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[65] Recorded interview with Bill Malayko, Brian Cherwick, March 26, 1992; Interview with Peter Gargus, Brian Cherwick, May, 13, 1992

The third generation of tsymbaly performers are also third generation Canadians. Their involvement with the tsymbaly reflects both a continuity within the tradition as well as a search for cultural roots. These performers take their examples from both preceding generations of musicians, and at the same time are affected by an even wider scope of external influences. Many have been introduced to the tradition by a single instructor or mentor, and have later gone on to develop further innovations with regard to technique and repertoire. Two examples of this group are Steven Chwok and Chris Gargus, both of Edmonton.

There is a fourth generation of tsymbaly performers developing. Many of these are students of the second and especially of the third group of musicians. At the present time this group is primarily imitating the techniques and repertoire of its teachers, and has yet to develop any of its own distinct characteristics.

CHAPTER FOUR: CASE STUDIES

4.1 Biographies of informants

In addition to studying the repertoires and performance processes of folk musicians, an investigation of their lives can further reveal their roles within the musical tradition and the community in general.[1] When discussing tsymbaly performers in Alberta these life experiences affect not only the specific components of their craft, but the contexts in which they exist.

4.1.1 Nick Mischi

Nick Mischi was born in the village of Shypyntsi, Bukovyna in 1907. He recalls his first experience playing the tsymbaly at around age six when some neighbours asked his parents to store an instrument for them.[2] He began learn to play in earnest at age eight under the guidance of his uncle, who was a well-known musician in their area.[3] Mischi recalls several nights when his uncle gathered a number of young musicians together in his home to instruct them on how to play various instruments. He notes that the young men had such a passion for music that they often played without breaks until they noticed sunlight filling the room.[4]

After about six months of instruction, Mischi began accompanying his uncle at dances. Their group consisted of Mischi on tsymbaly, his uncle

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[1] David Evans, "Folk Singers and Folk Musicians," in Handbook of American Folklore, ed. Richard M. Dorson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp. 282-286.

[2] Interview with Nick Mischi, Brian Cherwick, February, 1992.

[3] Recorded interview with Nick Mischi, Brian Cherwick, May, 1992. Also see "Dulcimer In Concert With Nick Mischi," Maple Haze Records, MH 7662.

[4] Mischi, May, 1992.

on violin, and a third musician playing a string bass instrument.[5] His first engagement was a mid-winter dance, two days after Christmas. The dance was held outdoors, with the dancing taking place in the snow. Mischi recalls some of the guests at this dance coaxing him to drink beer in order to "keep his fingers warm." The negative effect of alcohol on an eight year old boy and the stigma of being labeled a "drunk" was enough to cause Mischi to swear off drinking while performing for the rest of his career.[6]

Although the three piece band was a standard for most of Ukraine,[7] the Mischi band occasionally included up to a dozen musicians.[8] The majority of their performances were in the Shypyntsi region, although they also travelled to other villages, sometimes up to a hundred kilometres away.[9]

Since weddings could take place any day of the week, and often lasted for several days, musicians could be required to spend several days away from home. This lifestyle soon interfered with Mischi's formal

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[5] Mischi described this instrument as a "cello-bass," although it is sometimes also referred to as *bassolia*. Hnat Khotkevych, Muzychni instrumenty ukrains'koho narodu (Kharkiv: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo Ukrainy, 1929), pp. 34-37; A. Humeniuk, Ukrains'ki narodni muzychni instrumenty (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1967), pp. 144-146; V. Komarenko, Ukrains'kyi orkestr narodnykh instrumentiv [Ukrainian orchestra of folk instruments] (Kyiv: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo obrazotvorchoho mystetstva i muzychnoi literatury URSR, 1960), p. 58

[6] Mischi, May, 1992.

[7] In Ukraine, folk orchestras consisted mainly of three or four musicians. The instrumentation varied according to region. In central Ukraine the most common grouping was two violins, *baraban* [bass drum] and *bassolia* [bass]. Among the Hutsuls, groups were often formed with two violins who played in unison and a *tsymbaly*. In other parts of Western Ukraine, the violin, *tsymbaly* and *bubon* [hand drum] formed the trio of musicians. Humeniuk, Ukrains'ki narodni muzychni instrumenty, p. 22; Khotkevych, p. 32; William Noll, "Stari muzykanty na Ukraini" [Old musicians in Ukraine], Rodovid, vol. 1, 1990, pp. 37-41.

[8] Mischi, May, 1992. This large band would consist of two violins, tsymbaly, bassolia, contra-bass, two trumpets, two trombones, clarinet, sopilka and percussion.

[9] Mischi, May, 1992.

education. Since he appeared destined for a career in music, Mischi's father convinced the local school teacher to sign a diploma for him after only two years of study.

In 1928, Mischi decided to seek a new life in Canada. While working for the Canadian National Railway, he continued to perform both as a tsymbaly soloist and with a number of local dance bands,including the "High Lites" in the Wabamun district, and the "Easy Aces" and the "Marangos" in Edmonton.[10]

4.1.2 Bill Malayko

Bill Malayko was born in Andrew, Alberta in 1922. His father and his uncle were both tsymbaly players, and were his earliest musical influences.[11]

Malayko began his musical career playing banjo. At the age of fifteen, however, he came in contact with Metro Radomsky, an accomplished local violinist. Tsymbaly was a major component of the Radomsky Orchestra,[12] and some of Radomsky's tsymbaly players had an influence on Malayko.[13] Impressed by the style of the band, Malayko decided to give up the banjo in favour of the tsymbaly.

Another major influence on Malayko's musical development was John Zelisko. His band was popular around the Andrew district, and its style was copied by other bands in the area. Instruments built by Zelisko

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[10] Mischi, May, 1992.

[11] Recorded interview with Bill Malayko, Brian Cherwick, March, 1992.

[12] "Metro Radomsky: Orchestra Leader of Ukrainian Country Music," Forum: A Ukrainian Review, No. 47, Spring, 1981. pp. 8-10.

[13] Malayko mentions his cousin Metro Lastiwka and Metro Radomsky's brother Bill, both tsymbaly players in the Radomsky Orchestra, as influences.

were also valued by local musicians. Malayko began playing on an instrument built by his father, but he soon acquired a Zelisko-built tsymbaly.[14]

Malayko made his living as a farmer and later as a school bus driver, but music is a major part of his life. He performed with several bands in the Andrew area, but spent the longest time playing with the Radomsky Orchestra, and presently alternates playing with a number of local groups. Playing at weddings often took him away from home for several days, and although it was not always financially very profitable he remembers these engagements fondly.[15]

4.1.3 Al Billey

Al Billey was born in 1946 and grew up near Edwand, Alberta. From early childhood he was surrounded with music. His grandfather and great uncles were musicians, as were his father and uncles, who had a band known as the "Edwand Harmonizers." Besides being musicians, the "Harmonizers" were also craftsmen who built their own instruments.[16]

Billey began playing the tsymbaly at age nine. His first instruction came from his uncle who was an accomplished player and who helped him

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[14] Mark Jaroslav Bandera, The Tsymbaly Maker and His Craft: The Ukrainian Hammered Dulcimer in Alberta Canadian Series in Ukrainian Ethnology 1 (Edmonton: Huculak Chair of Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography and Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1991), pp. 41-42. Bandera found from discussion with tsymbaly builders that there is status attached to playing Zelisko tsymbaly.Many of these builders have made attempts to acquire these instruments themselves in order to copy their pattern.

[15] Malayko recalls playing at weddings in the late 1930s where the entire band received five dollars for three days work. According to Radomsky Orchestra tsymbalist Metro Lastiwka, at that time $5.00 could buy a new pair of shoes. Recorded interview with Metro Lastiwka, Brian Cherwick, June, 1992.

[16] Recorded interview with Al Billey, Brian Cherwick, March, 1992.

develop advanced technique.[17] He continued to develop by watching and listening to other well-known tsymbaly players, most notably the late John Dlugosz of Lamont, Alberta.[18]

Billey performed for many years in a band with his father and brother, billing themselves as "A Father and His Sons: Bat'ko i Syny."[19]. He later went on to form a band with his brother, his cousin and his and their children. Billey played both tsymbaly and saxophone in this group, called "The Harmonizers" in honour of his fathers' band.[20] He has also experimented with the instrument in non-traditional settings such as tsymbaly duos and trios,[21] as well as in bands performing non-Ukrainian music.He currently performs with the dance band "Spectrum," and with the Christian rock group "Fairweather Forecast," both of Ponoka, Alberta.

4.1.4 Albert Billey

Albert Billey is not related to Al Billey, however the two share very similar life experiences. Albert was also born in 1946, and grew up in the Smoky Lake area. He got his start in music at age 13 playing drums in a band with Al Billey. It was their natural rivalry that lead him to begin playing tsymbaly. After watching the other Billey with his tsymbaly, he

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[17] Recorded interview with Robert J. Tompkins, Brian Cherwick, November, 1991. Tompkins noted that Billey is famous for his technique of damping the strings of his instrument while playing. This will be further discussed in Chapter 4.3.3, "String Damping."

[18] Dlugosz performed with the band "Bill Boychuk and the Easy Aces." Billey considers him to have been the best tsymbaly player in Alberta.

[19] "A Father and His Sons: Bat'ko i Syny: Ukrainian Music and Song." Heritage Records, HR-18.

[20] Al Billey. Billey's brother Lawrence also contributed to the beginning of this interview.

[21] Billey has performed and recorded as part of a tsymbaly duo with Albert Billey of Edmonton, performed in a tsymbaly trio with Albert Billey and Steven Chwok.

decided "if he can play one, I can play one."[22] At age 20 he acquired an instrument and began to teach himself.

Albert Billey did not have a mentor or instructor, but rather, taught himself to play by figuring out familiar melodies, combined with "a lot of watching."[23] In a similar fashion he taught himself to play guitar, accordion and saxophone. He went on to form his own band, "The Northern Kings," which has been together for over 25 years, and has performed throughout Alberta and even as far as Yellowknife, N.W.T..[24]

4.1.5 Steven Chwok

Of the younger generation of tsymbaly performers in Alberta, Steven Chwok is perhaps the best known.

Chwok was born in Edmonton in 1964 into a musical family. He first came in contact with tsymbaly at the age of 9 while attending a wedding in Waskateneau, Alberta. The band playing at the door of this wedding was the "Northern Troubadours" featuring tsymbaly player Paul Chychul. Chwok became intrigued with the look and sound of the tsymbaly, especially after Chychul played one of his requests.[25]

Chwok began learning to play under the guidance of his father's cousin, Peter Holowaty. Holowaty played tsymbaly with "Kassian's Musical Pioneers," and also built instruments.[26] Chwok studied with him for a year

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[22] Recorded interview with Albert Billey, Brian Cherwick, March, 1992.

[23] Billey lists Bill Malayko, Bill Semeniuk of Andrew, and Johnny Shandro who played with "The Five Gents" as influences.

[24] The "Northern Kings" have performed in Yellowknife, N.W.T. several times for "Malanka" dances sponsored by the local Ukrainian Association.

[25] Recorded interview with Steven Chwok, Brian Cherwick, May, 1992.

[26] "Ukrainian Memories with the Sons of the Ukrainian Pioneers," Maple Haze Records, MH 7808, contains the following note about Holowaty: "Peter Holowaty - Dulcimer -

and a half, and then continued developing on his own.[27] Chwok admits that his own style was developed by observing various tsymbaly performers playing at weddings and dances.[28]

Chwok's own performing career began not long after he started playing. He took part in a number of tsymbaly contests, eventually winning several of them. He often performed as a soloist at seniors' homes and hospitals throughout the province. At age 12 he began playing at dances with "The Rhythm Kings," a band which for a time featured tsymbaly builder Johnny Kinasewich on violin. At age 18 he formed his own band, "Prairie Pride," with which he continues to record and perform. Chwok has also been involved in some projects which are outside the mainstream tsymbaly tradition. He has performed in a tsymbaly trio with Al and Albert Billey. He has also performed as a member of the large pit orchestra accompanying Edmonton's Ukrainian Shumka Dancers.

Besides his activity as a performer, Chwok is well known as a teacher. He has taught over 20 students, many of whom have gone on to play in various bands, to win contests and to release recordings.[29]

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started out playing the violin, but loved the dulcimer so much that he not only plays but builds them. He says he would rather build a house." Steven Chwok still plays a tsymbaly built by Peter Holowaty.

[27] Chwok notes that many people claim to have taught him, but that his only instructor was Holowaty.

[28] Among those performers observed Chwok lists Bill Malayko, Bill Semeniuk, Paul Chychul, Al Billey and Albert Billey.

[29] In 1985 Chwok produced an album featuring some of his students entitled "Steven Chwok presents His Finest Dulcimer Youth," Heritage Records, HR-48.

4.1.6 Chris Gargus

Chris Gargus is another example of a younger generation tsymbaly performer. He was born in 1966 and grew up near Lamont, Alberta. He moved to Edmonton at age 15.

The Gargus family is also very musical. Chris's father, Peter, began his musical career playing drums in the famous "John Zelisko Orchestra."[30] He then formed his own band, first with other local musicians, and later with his sons.[31] Peter's brothers also played with various bands.

Chris Gargus got his start in music at age 5 playing drums with his father's band. At age 13 he decided to learn a second instrument, and chose the tsymbaly. He had been encouraged to try the tsymbaly because there were not many people his age playing the instrument.[32] Gargus got his first instrument from Edmonton tsymbaly builder Nick Superwich, who was a friend of his father.[33]

Gargus's introduction to tsymbaly playing came from his uncles, Mike Gargus of Mundare and Walter Gargus of Andrew. He received additional instruction from his school bus driver, Bill Malayko, and from watching older players like Bill Semeniuk. His greatest influence was his father, Peter, who taught him a large repertoire of pieces as well as the specifics of the old-time Ukrainian musical style. He has synthesized all these influences to create what he considers his own personal style.[34]

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[30] Interview with Peter Gargus, Brian Cherwick, May, 1992.

[31] The Gargus family band, "The Swingsters," features father Peter on violin, trumpet and saxophone, and sons Charles on guitar and trumpet; Dwayne on guitar, drums and saxophone; Mel on guitar, bass, drums, and saxophone; and Chris on drums and tsymbaly, with Serge Lopushinsky on keyboards.

[32] Recorded interview with Chris Gargus, Brian Cherwick, May 13, 1992.

[33] Peter Gargus often tunes instruments for Superwich and his customers.

[34] Chris Gargus, May 13, 1992.

Gargus received additional motivation to perfect his tsymbaly technique through a series of tsymbaly contests held in Alberta in the late 1970s and early 1980s. At these contests he came in contact with other young players, such as Steven Chwok, and developed a rivalry. The prize money and prestige which went along with winning one of these contests motivated him to improve his tsymbaly skills.[35]Gargus is also known as a tsymbaly teacher, having trained a number of students who have gone on to achieve their own prominence as performers.

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[35] Ibid.

Plate 3: Nick Mischi. Photo: Brian Cherwick.

Plate 4: Bill Malayko and Metro Radomsky performing at a house wedding, 1964. Photo courtesy Bill and Pearl Malayko.

Plate 5: Al and Albert Billey performing at North Central Alberta Radio Network Tsymbaly Contest, Edmonton. Photo: B. Cherwick.

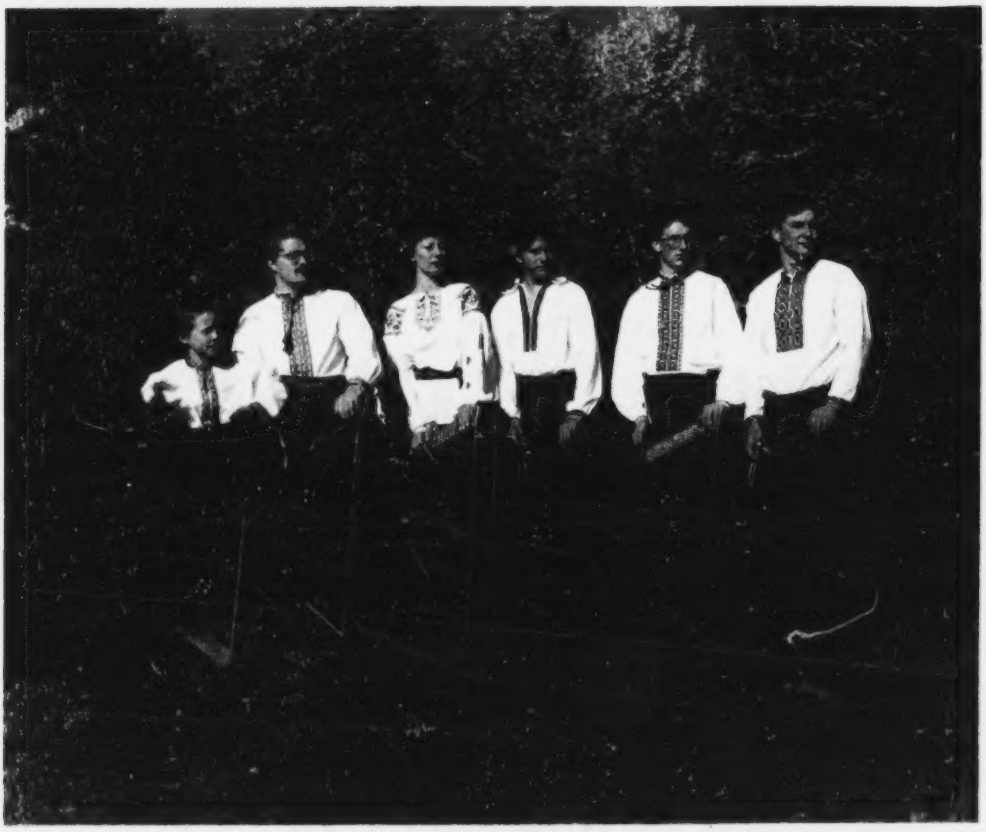

Plate 6: Steven Chwok with some of his students. Photo courtesy Kenneth Huculak, Heritage Records.

Plate 7: Chris Gargus. Photo: B. Cherwick.

4.2 Instruments

4.2.1 Tuning systems

The tsymbaly used by musicians in Alberta consist of 16 to 22 courses of strings. Depending on how these strings are tuned, the instrument can have a range of up to three full octaves. A wide variety of tunings systems exist, with individual musicians often creating their own modifications.

Historical examples show that at one time tsymbaly were tuned diatonically.[36] Ukrainian composer and musicologist Mykola Lysenko documented a tsymbaly tuning common in the late 19th century.[37] Although it seems unusual at first glance, when transposed up one half step, his example produces a system which allows for playing in the keys of C major, G major, and D major, and related minors (see Figure 1). This example provides the skeletal structure upon which most Alberta tunings are based.

Contemporary tsymbaly tuning basically follows the chromatic scale. In some cases chromatic notes which are rarely used are omitted, especially along the bass bridge, in order to further expand the range of the instrument without increasing its size. Development of this system has established some patterns to which almost all tsymbaly performers adhere.

Bill Malayko plays a tsymbaly with 16 courses of strings which are tuned to provide 24 notes (see Figure 2b). As on all tsymbaly, the strings crossing over the centre bridge can be played on either side, each

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[36] Humeniuk, Ukrains'ki narodni muzychni instrumenty, p.109.

[37] Mykola Lysenko, Narodni muzychni instrumenty na Ukraini (Kyiv: Mystetstvo, 1950), pp. 53-55.

producing two notes separated by the interval of a perfect fifth. Because of this, some of the notes repeat themselves, in this case two. His first (lowest) course is tuned to d and his second course to f#' and b, as is the Lysenko example. The instrument is essentially tuned in two complete octaves, with some chromatic additions. Although it does have all twelve chromatic half steps, nowhere do they all appear consecutively. For this reason the musician often has to jump octaves in order to play melodic or harmonic figures requiring certain chromatic steps.

Malayko uses this tuning because it was in place when he acquired his first instrument. He notes that although it presents some problems, he has become accustomed to this tuning and has developed a playing style which overcomes its problems.

Al Billey, Albert Billey, and Chris Gargus all play instruments with 20 courses of strings, and all three use a tuning system which is virtually identical. This system appears to be the most widespread throughout Alberta.[38] This is perhaps due to the fact that 20 course instruments are most common built by Alberta tsymbaly craftsmen.[39]

This tuning system is basically a development of the one used by Bill Malayko. Courses have been added to both the upper and lower ends of the instrument, expanding its range to 30 notes, five of which are repetitions. The bass bridge has c added at the bottom and c' at the top, while the centre bridge is expanded to e", with an additional chromatic half step (c#"/f#') also inserted.

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[38] The other systems used appear to be variants of this basic set up.

[39] Johnny Kinasewich, Nick Superwich, and Tom Chychul, three of the most popular contemporary tsymbaly builders in Alberta, all build 20 course instruments.

Al Billey has developed a variation to this standard tuning. Rather than e" as his highest note, he has retuned this course of strings to eb". This is due to the fact that much of the music he performs with bands is often played in keys using two or more flats, perhaps because the band contains a saxophone.[40] Albert Billey prefers e" at the top of his instrument because he often plays with a violinist who prefers the keys containing sharps.[41]

Steven Chwok plays an instrument with 22 courses of strings. While the range of his instrument is the same as 20 course instrument, he is able to use more chromaticization. His tuning system adds c#' to the top of the bass bridge and d#"/ g#' near the top of the centre bridge. He learned this tuning from his father's cousin, Peter Holowaty.

The greatest alterations to the standard Alberta tuning system are employed by Nick Mischi. He plays a 22 course instrument which is essentially tuned in the same fashion as Chwok's. However, Mischi feels that the duplication of notes which occurs on most tsymbaly is both redundant and too limiting for the player. While in Ukraine, he saw a system, devised by his uncle, which allowed for further expansion of the range without increasing the size of the instrument. When Mischi obtained his first tsymbaly in Canada, he altered it according to this system.

Most duplication of notes on a tsymbaly occurs in the upper section of the centre bridge. The notes at the upper right of this bridge are often the same as those at the lower left. Mischi eliminated this duplication by

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[40] Al Billey.
[41] Albert Billey, March, 1992.

inserting "chessmen" bridges[42] under the top three strings. By retuning he obtained e", f" and a'" on the right side of the centre bridge and d', d#', and g' on the left side. Alterations of this type are a main feature of the Grand Concert Cimbalom developed in Hungary by Schunda in the 1870s.[43] Perhaps it is from the cimbalom that Mischi's uncle arrived at this system.

A second alteration which Mischi made was to remove the lowest course of strings on the centre bridge by shortening this bridge. Instead, he inserted another "chessman" bridge to the left of the centre, creating an extra bass note. He tuned this to c, retuning the lowest course on the bass bridge to A.

Perhaps the most common idiosyncrasy found on the Ukrainian tsymbaly occurs on the centre bridge. Here the ascending chromatic pattern of notes is altered, with g#'/c#' preceding g'/c'. This reversal of notes was common even on instruments in Ukraine (see Figure 1c). All of the instruments encountered in this study had this feature, but no players could offer a definite explanation as to why. Bill Malayko noted that this often posed problems when he was learning the instrument, but that he adapted to it. Albert Billey felt that this system allowed the musician to play certain common chord patterns with less motion from course to course. Chris Gargus also believed that this allowed the player to keep a similar distance

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[42] John Leach, "The Dulcimer," The Consort 25 (1968-69), pp. 390-396. The "chessman" style bridges are often used on British and American hammered dulcimers, replacing the long bridges found on Ukrainian instruments.

[43] David Kettlewell, "Dulcimer," in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, vol. 5, ed. Stanley Satie (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1980), pp. 620-631.

relationship between strings (for example, three courses apart) when playing melodic passages harmonized at the interval of a third.

The informants felt that all tsymbaly players in Alberta, with the exception of one, followed this pattern.[44] With the popularity of these musicians and the number of students who follow their example, this basic tuning system has become a "standard."[45]

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[44] Bill Malayko, March, 1991. Malayko notes that Mike Ewanchuk of Andrew, AB has changed his tsymbaly so that the notes ascended, G# following G.

[45] Recorded interview with Irene Chamczuk, November, 1992; recorded interview with Shane Gibson, November, 1992; recorded interview with Wade Wasylciw, November, 1992. Discussion with these students of Steven Chwok and Chris Gargus, show that they follow the same tuning systems as their teachers.

Figure 1: Tuning Systems in Ukraine

The rows represent the notes to which each course of strings is tuned, while the columns indicate their position on the instrument. For example:

Db	Gb	Bb
Left Side of Centre Bridge	Right Side of Centre Bridge	Bass Bridge

a. LYSENKO

d♭''	g♭'	b♭
c''	f'	a♭
b♭'	e♭'	g♭
a♭'	d♭'	f♭
g♭'	c♭'	e♭
f'	b♭	d♭

b. LYSENKO(transposed)

d'	g'	b
c#'	f#'	a
b'	e'	g
a'	d'	f
g'	c'	e
f#'	b	d

c. MIERCZYNSKI

d''	g'	
c#''	f#'	
c''	f'	
b'	e'	
a'	d'	a
g'	c'	g
g#'	c#'	f
f#'	b	e
e'	a	d

Figure 2a: Tuning systems in Alberta

a. NICK MISCHI

g''	a''	c'
d#''	f''	c#'
d''	e''	b
c#''	e#'	b^b
c''	e'	a
b'	e'	g
$b^{b'}$	$e^{b'}$	f#
a'	d'	f
g'	c'	e
g#'	c#'	d
c		
		A

b. BILL MALAYKO

d''	g'	b
c''	f'	b^b
b'	e'	a
$b^{b'}$	$e^{b'}$	g
a'	d'	f#
g'	c'	f
g#'	c#'	e
f#'	b	d

c. AL BILLEY

$e^{b''}$	$a^{b'}$	c'
d''	g'	b
c#''	f#'	b^b
c''	f'	a
b'	e'	g
$b^{b'}$	$e^{b'}$	f#
a'	d'	f
g'	c'	e
g#'	c#'	d
f#'	b	c

d. ALBERT BILLEY

e''	a'	c'
d''	g'	b
c#''	f#'	b^b
c''	f'	a
b'	e'	g
$b^{b'}$	$e^{b'}$	f#
a'	d'	f
g'	c'	e
g#'	c#'	d
f#'	b	c

e. STEVEN CHWOK

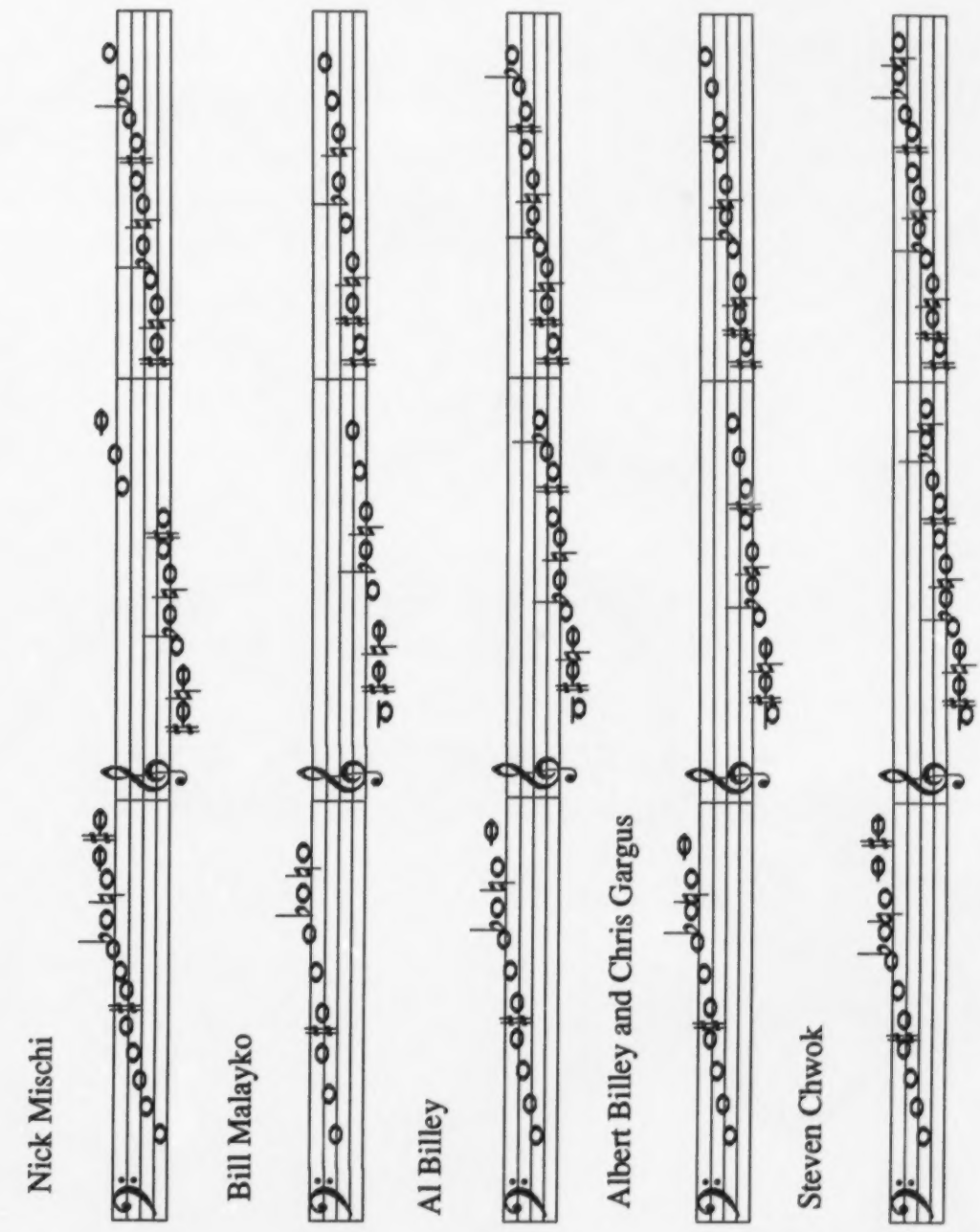
e''	a'	c#'
d#''	g#'	c
d''	g'	b
c#''	f#'	b^b
c''	f'	a
b'	e'	g
$b^{b'}$	$e^{b'}$	f#
a'	d'	f
g'	c'	e
g#'	c#'	d
f#'	b	c

f. CHRIS GARGUS

e''	a'	c'
d''	g'	b
c#''	f#'	b^b
c''	f'	a
b'	e'	g
$b^{b'}$	$e^{b'}$	f#
a'	d'	f
g'	c'	e
g#'	c#'	d
f#'	b	c

Figure 2b: Tuning systems in Alberta. Notes are presented at actual pitch. Staves are arranged as such:

Bass bridge / Right side of centre bridge / Left side of centre bridge.



4.2.2 Instrument construction

Although the tuning systems vary, the actual instruments used by most tsymbaly performers in Alberta are quite similar in appearance and construction.

All instruments consist of a hardwood frame, usually made of maple or oak, and a softwood sound board, usually made of sitka spruce or occasionally from cedar siding.[46] At the left wrestplank, strings are attached to the instrument by looping them around hitchpins made from nails or rivets. At the right wrestplank they are passed through pre-drilled holes in threaded zither pegs, then wound.

While in Ukraine tsymbaly contained three,[47] four,[48] or six[49] strings per course, in Alberta six strings per course has become the standard. Iron, steel, brass, copper and bronze wire of various gauges can be used for strings. Bronze appears to be the present favourite.[50]

Although threaded pegs are now standard, Nick Mischi recalls his first instrument being outfitted with unthreaded pegs manufactured by the village blacksmith. The absence of threads made the maintenance the tuning on an instrument a greater challenge. Also, these pegs did not have holes drilled for attaching the strings. Instead, the player was required to carefully bend the string, then wind it down around itself. Manufactured

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46 Bandera, Tsymbaly Maker, pp. 21-39. Bandera gives a detailed description of how tsymbaly in Alberta are typically constructed.

47 Mykola Lysenko, p. 51.

48 Khotkevych, p. 164.

49 Stanislaw Mierczynski, Muzyka Huculszczyzny (Cracow: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1965), p.150-151.

50 All six informants discussed used bronze wire for strings, with Al and Albert Billey and Chris Gargus citing tsymbaly builder Nick Superwich as their supplier.

threaded pegs became common in Mischi's village after the First World War.[51]

Although the basic construction of tsymbaly is similar, a variety of decorative features and finishes are applied to the instrument according to the tastes of the performer or builder. There are two basic finishes which are common for Alberta tsymbaly: In the first, the frame is treated with a light stain to reveal the natural colour and grain of the wood. The sound board is also left its natural colour. Bill Malayko's tsymbaly, built by John Zelisko, are finished in this manner. In the second finish, the frame is stained a medium to dark brown with the sound board painted black. Nick Mischi, Al and Albert Billey, Steven Chwok and Chris Gargus all have this type of finish on their instruments. Albert Billey believes that black sound boards became more popular because shadows of the strings cast by stage lights are less noticeable and, therefore, less distracting.[52]

While the older instruments, such as those used by Mischi and Malayko, are relatively plain, the instruments constructed by more contemporary builders feature a variety of decorative elements.

Steven Chwok's instrument, built by Peter Holowaty, has carved wooden molding along the tops of the end rails. This instrument also has two oblong holes cut into the front of the upper end rail. These were designed as handles for lifting the instrument, but also function as secondary sound holes.

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[51] Nick Mischi, May, 1992

[52] Albert Billey, March, 1992. For further examples of tsymbaly found in Alberta see Roy W. Gibbons, The CCFCS Collection of Musical Instruments. Volume Three: Chordophones. (Hull: National Museum of Man, Mercury Series, 1984).

Chris Gargus's instrument, built by Nick Superwich, has iridescent plastic glued onto the tops of the wrest planks, as well as a decorative ridge carved into the end rails. It also has a small handle attached to the top of the left wrest plank which is intended for lifting the instrument out of its case.

The instruments used by Al and Albert Billey were both built by Johnny Kinasewich. They feature iridescent plastic on the tops of the wrest planks, as well as various geometric patterns carved from the same plastic and outlined with black purfling[53] on the front and back end rails and around the edge of the sound board.

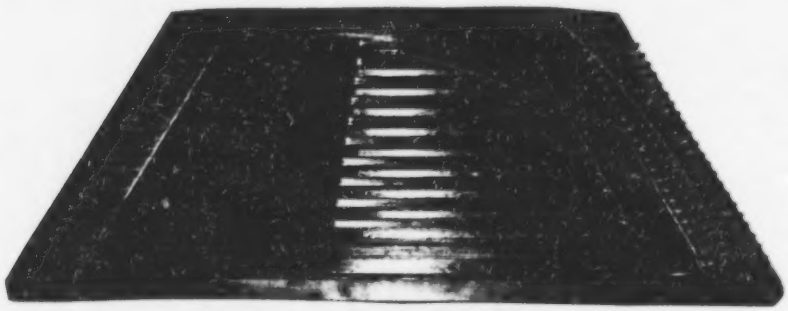

Plate 8: Tsymbaly. Owner, Nick Mischi. Builder unknown. Note extra bridges inserted at upper right and lower left of instrument. Photo: B. Cherwick.

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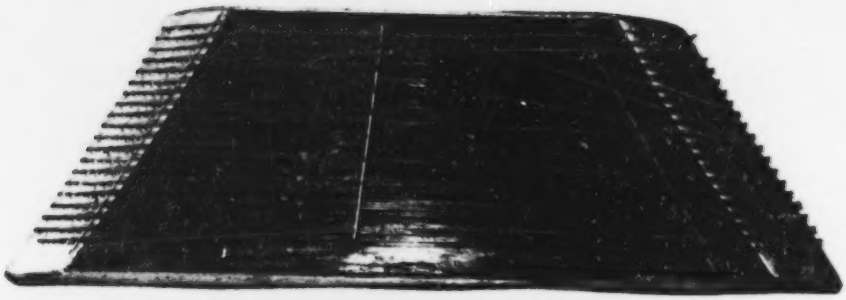
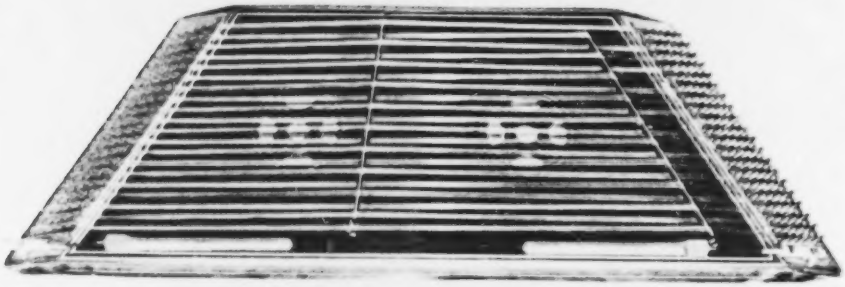
[53] Henry Rasof, The Folk, Country, and Bluegrass Musician's Catalogue (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), p. 187. Purfling is defined as: "strips of abalone, wood, plastic, etc., inlaid along the edge of an instrument that are mainly decorative but sometimes, as on the violin, functional."





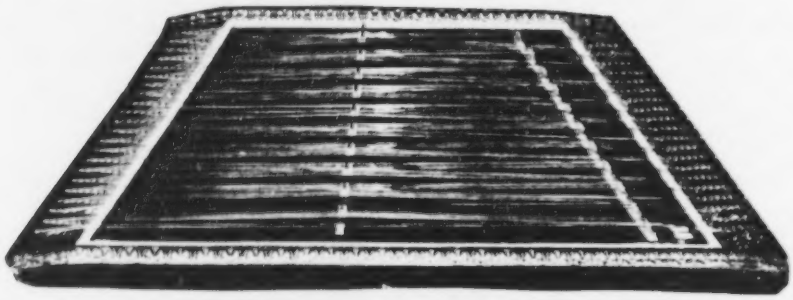


Plate 9: Tsymbaly. Owner, Bill Malayko. Builder, John Zelisko. Photo: B. Cherwick
Plate 10: Tsymbaly. Owner, Albert Billey. Builder, Johnny Kinasewich. Note similarities in construction, especially in the shape of sound holes. Kinasewich patterned his instrument after the Zelisko model. Photo: B. Cherwick
Plate 11: Tsymbaly. Owner, Steven Chwok. Builder, Peter Holowaty. Photo: B. Cherwick

4.2.3 Hammers

There are two basic types of playing hammers, or *pal'tsiatky* used in Alberta. One is a straight hammer with a solid, flat head, a circular opening for the index finger and a flat thumb rest, which is used by Nick Mischi and Steven Chwok. The second is a curved hammer featuring a larger head with a small hole drilled through it, and an open finger grip with a flat thumb rest. This type of hammer is used by Bill Malayko, Al Billey and Albert Billey. Chris Gargus uses a hammer which is a hybrid of the two: the circular finger grip of the first and the curved shape and circular head of the second. All the hammers are made of hardwood.

Each performer modifies the striking surface of the hammers according to his preference. Some players prefer a hard, crisp sound. To achieve this sound, Bill Malayko leaves his hammers unaltered, Al Billey and Steven Chwok glue hard plastic and a piece of ebony respectively to the heads to provide an even harder striking surface. Billey feels the plastic also prevents his hammers from wearing out. Other performers prefer a softer, more mellow sound. Nick Mischi has leather covers glued and sewn around the entire head of his hammers. Chris Gargus has a strip of leather glued to the bottom of his hammers, while Al Billey simply uses Elastoplast Bandages attached to the bottom of his hammers produce the sound he desires.

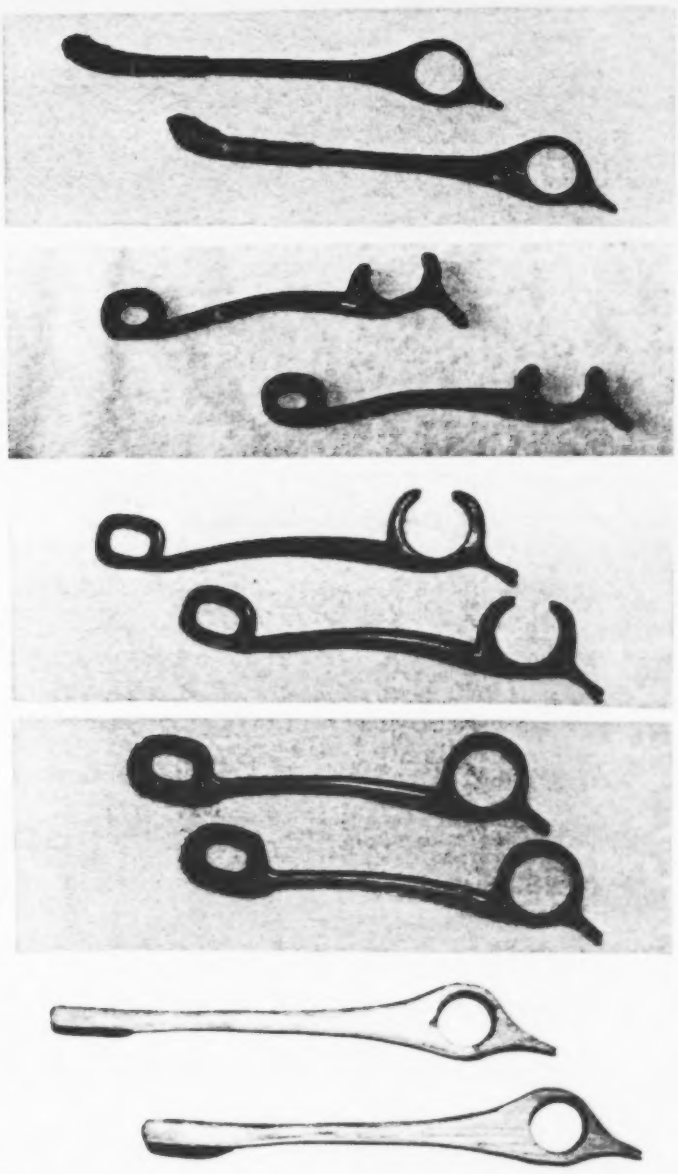


Plate 12: Tsymbaly hammers. Photo: B. Cherwick.
a) Bill Malayko, finger grip - open, striking surface - wood.
b) Nick Mischi, finger grip- closed, striking surface - leather.
c) Albert Billey, finger grip - open, striking surface - plastic.
d) Albert Billey (similar to those used by Chris Gargus), finger grip - closed, striking surface - leather.
e) Steven Chwok, finger grip - closed, striking surface - ebony.

4.2.4 Playing position

Traditionally, the most common way of holding the tsymbaly while performing, was for the musician to be seated, with the instrument resting on the lap.[54] This is still a popular method, used by many players including Bill Malayko and Steven Chwok. Many other variations have also developed.

Nick Mischi sat with his instrument on his lap for most of his playing career. However, in his later years, he found this position uncomfortable after a long night of playing. By adding a ledge to one of his band's signs,[55] he developed a system where one edge of his instrument rests on a stand, the other on his lap.

Chris Gargus sits to play, and his instrument is completely supported by a stand. This stand is put together with a commercially manufactured cymbal stand as the base, with a padded "table" on which the instrument rests attached to the top. This stand also features a small lamp which throws an even light across Gargus's instrument when he is performing.

Albert and Al Billey have completely departed from the seated playing position, each using an apparatus which allows the musician to stand when performing. These stands, developed by Albert Billey, are a combination of a cymbal stand base and a snare drum stand top, which grips the instrument.[56] These stands are also equipped with small lamps.

Although the Billey development seems like a radical departure from the tsymbaly performance tradition, it is somewhat a reflection of an older

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[54] Mykola Lysenko, p. 52.

[55] Many Ukrainian bands in Alberta use signs on stage similar to the box music stands made popular by North American big bands.

[56] It is probably Billey's stand which inspired the stand used by Chris Gargus.

tradition. At one time musicians performed standing while accompanying wedding marches and dances. The tsymbaly was held by a strap around the performer's neck.[57] While Mischi, Malayko and Al Billey all used this method in the past, none do so today.

4.2.5 Sound reinforcement

Initially, Ukrainian bands in Alberta played acoustically, without the aid of sound reinforcement. For small gatherings held in homes or outdoors the volume of sound was sufficient.[58] However, with the move to community halls as performance venues, bands began using microphones.[59] As technology developed, tsymbaly players have had to adopt increasingly elaborate systems in order to compete with the volume of sound produced by electric and electronic instruments.

Several methods of amplification exist, including the use of separate external microphones. The system used depends on the performer's individual taste. Most present-day tsymbaly players use some kind of electronic pick-up to amplify the sound of their instrument. The simplest of these is a magnetic contact pick-up, designed for use on violins. This type of device is held tightly against the body of the instrument, usually by an elasticized strap, picking up the vibrations. Nick Mischi, Bill Malayko and Steven Chwok all use this type of pick-up. Mischi and Malayko attach theirs

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[57] Mykola Lysenko, p. 52.

[58] Steve D. Panych, "Panych, Steve D. and Kate," in Pride in Progress: Chipman - St. Michael - Star and Districts (Chipman: Alberta Rose Historical Society, 1982), pp. 612-613. Panych recalls the music echoing for miles on a still night if played on a platform built outside.

[59] Lastiwka. According to Metro Lastiwka, the Radomsky Orchestra used microphones as early as 1935.

to the top of the instrument, picking up vibrations of the sound board, while Chwok attaches his to the bottom board.

A newer form of violin pick-up was developed by the Barcus-Berry Company. It consists of a small (3 mm. X 6 mm.) but more sensitive sensor, which is intended to be attached to the bridge of a violin. Al Billey uses this pick-up, attaching it to the sound board of his instrument. Chris Gargus has this type of pick-up, built directly into the body of his instrument by Nick Superwich.[60] It is attached to the underside of the sound board, with the cord jack placed in the centre of the top end rail. Other internal pick-up systems also exist.[61]

Albert Billey experimented with a number of amplification systems for his instrument, from the ones mentioned above to a pair of highly sensitive studio microphones. None of these reproduced the instrument's tone to his satisfaction. Eventually, he settled on a system known as "C-Ducer Gigster" pick-ups. These pick-ups were initially developed to find faults in electric motors, but have been adapted to use on a wide variety of musical instruments. Billey has two mounted along the bottom edge of his sound board, one on either side of the centre bridge. With the aid of a fader, he can balance the volume between the treble courses along the centre bridge and the bass courses along the right bridge.

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[60] Because of the popularity of pick-ups, Superwich builds them into all of his tsymbaly.

[61] Metro Lastiwka built three pick-ups into his instrument, mounting volume and tone controls on the right side of the sound board.

4.3 Technique

4.3.1 Attack

The basic tsymbaly technique involves striking the strings with the hammers. The stroke is an even combination of forearm and wrist movement. Too much of either restricts the speed with which the performer can play.[62]When playing the tsymbaly the hands are usually held with the palms perpendicular to the instrument. This takes advantage of the flexibility of the wrists, allowing the performer to execute repeated rapid strokes.[63] Novice players often lock their wrists, resulting in a stiff, choppy sound with limited speed and accuracy.[64]

The playing stroke should be quick and crisp. The goal is to strike the strings and rebound immediately, allowing them to vibrate. If the sticks are allowed to rest on the strings, the resulting sound will be choked or muffled.

Most tsymbaly player stress that strokes should be distributed evenly between both hands. Some novice players tend to favour the right hand, again sacrificing speed and accuracy.[65]

A variation of the standard striking method is used by Al Billey. He uses a playing position that has the palm of his left hand facing upward, away from the instrument. He uses this hand extensively for damping the strings. He compensates with extremely quick right hand technique, and by

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[62] Chwok.

[63] In Ukraine a technique has developed with the palms facing the instrument. This is based on the Hungarian cimbalom technique and allows for even greater flexibility in the wrists. See Oleksandr Nezovybat'ko, Shkola hry na ukrains'kykh tsymbalakh (Kyiv: Mystetstvo, 1966), pp. 8-10.

[64] Chwok.

[65] Mischi, May, 1992.

using the weight of the sticks for bounce when playing repeated strokes or tremoli.

4.3.2 Hammer grip

The tsymbaly hammers or *pal'tsiatky* are held between the index and middle fingers. During the stroke, they are allowed to pivot between the fingers slightly in order to take advantage of their weight in assisting with rebounding off the strings. The grip is the same for hammers with either open and closed finger grips.

Most hammers also have a thumb rest behind the finger grips. According to Steven Chwok these help stabilize the hammers, minimizing lateral motion, thereby enhancing accuracy.

Most tsymbaly performers in this study utilize these thumb rests, with the exception of Al and Albert Billey. Both Billeys use a grip that has the thumb extended away from the hammers. To compensate, added pressure is placed between the index and middle fingers. Both felt that by removing the thumb, the hammers could bounce more freely.

4.3.3 String damping

Once the strings of the tsymbaly are struck, they continue to vibrate and to sound. This can cause a lot of extraneous noise when performing, especially when moving between chord structures or when changing tonalities. In order to combat unwanted sound, tsymbaly performers must damp the strings.

The strings on tsymbaly are damped simply by stopping their vibration with the hand or fingers.This technique is referred to by Al Billey as string damping, while Albert Billey refers to it as "buffing." Nick

Mischi recalled that in Ukraine the description of this technique was "*hasyty* ," which literally means to extinguish.

The prime advocate of string damping in Alberta is Al Billey. In fact, his string damping technique has become his trade mark.[66] He rapidly turns his left hand from the palm up position to palm down and touches the strings he wants stopped. Nick Mischi and Bill Malayko do most string damping with the right hand. This is because they feel that the longer bass strings require damping most often. Albert Billey and Steven Chwok use either hand to damp, depending on what part of the instrument they are playing on. Chris Gargus does not use any string damping. He feels that pressure on the strings will affect the tuning of the instrument. Instead, he prefers to offset the ringing of the notes of one chord or tonality with a strong attack on the root of the next.

4.3.4 Ornamentation

Since tsymbaly can be grouped together with other percussion instruments,[67] much of the technique is similar to that employed with other percussion instruments. The basic stroke, described above, is similar to the strokes used to produce sound on most of the mallet instruments. Consequently, the techniques used to produce musical ornamentation are also similar to that of other percussive instruments.

The most common ornamental feature employed by Alberta tsymbaly performers is the tremolo. This consists of a number of strokes

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[66] Tompkins.

[67] E. M. Hornbostel and C. Sachs, "Classification of Musical Instruments," trans. A. Baines and K. P. Wachmann, in The Galpin Society Journal, no. 14, March, 1961. pp. 13-29.

repeated on the same note in rapid succession, producing the effect of a single sustained note. By controlling the speed with which the hammers are alternated, along with the force with which they strike the strings, the performer can achieve crescendi and diminuendi while sustaining a note.

Most performers achieve tremoli by alternating hammers. One exception to this is Al Billey. Since Billey often has his left hand reserved for damping the strings, he is forced to produce tremoli with consecutive strokes of the same hammer. In order to maintain a smoothness of sound, he allows the hammer to bounce more freely, taking advantage of the natural rebound of the hammer off the strings.

Often, two courses of strings are sounded simultaneously in order to give harmonic support to the melody. In such cases one hammer is assigned to each course of strings. The performer must alternate hammers very rapidly in order to guarantee an even, smooth sound.

Another common ornament used by tsymbaly performers is the grace note. This consists of a short note (often a 16th or 32nd note) which precedes the melody note. The grace note commonly comes from a semi-tone above or below the melody note, although it could also be a note of a chord outlining the harmonic structure of the melodic passage.

Grace notes tend to be a more common feature in the technique of older players such as Nick Mischi and Bill Malayko. The traditional melodies they continue to perform are often full of such ornaments, giving these pieces their distinctive flavour. Younger players employ them less frequently, usually to accent certain melodic notes.[68]

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[68] See Chapter 4.4, "Repertoire."

Since the tsymbaly is played with only two hammers, the performer can only sound two notes simultaneously. In order to outline chords comprised of more than two notes, the performer must use the arpeggio. This involves playing the various notes of a given chord in succession. The performer can chose to outline the chord in more than one octave, occasionally creating an arpeggio of seven or more notes.[69] The speed with which the performer must strike these notes depends on the duration of time in which they must sound.

Another type of arpeggio use involves playing the various degrees of a chord in order to fill gaps in the melody. For example, rather than striking a string once and allowing it to ring for the duration of a whole note, the performer may chose to fill the four beats with combinations of strokes on various degrees of the chord. This not only allows the performer to outline the harmonic structure, but also provides rhythmic interest during melodic pauses.

One possible technique which has not found widespread use among Alberta performers is plucking the strings. Steven Chwok noted that in his performances with the Ukrainian Shumka Dancers, he is occasionally called upon to pluck the strings of his instrument to create a special effect. Plucking of strings has become a fairly common technique among performers in Ukraine.[70]

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[69] With the most common tuning system used by most Alberta tsymbaly performers, a C major arpeggio consisting of c, e, g, c', e', g', c'', e'' is the largest possible combination. Nick Mischi can create other larger arpeggios due to the extended range of his instrument.

[70] Dmytro Popichuk, Kontsertni tvory dlia tsymbal i fortepiano (Kyiv: Muzychna Ukraina, 1981). Several pieces in this collection call for the performer to pluck the strings of the tsymbaly

4.4 Repertoire

The repertoire of Alberta tsymbaly players can be broken down into three main categories:

1) traditional music to accompany rituals

2) arrangements of non-ritual songs

3) dance music.

4.4.1 Ritual music

The Ukrainian wedding tradition is filled with songs which are necesssary in order to make the celebration ritually complete.[71] Nick Mischi's early training was at weddings and dances in Bukovyna. Consequently, he still remembers playing at weddings which included traditional ritual elements such as the *vinkopletennia* [wreath making], blessing by the parents, marching to the church, and celebrations at the homes of both the bride and the groom. Each stage of the wedding process had its own specific music, which he was required to learn and perform.[72] Although they are not commonly heard at contemporary weddings in Canada, many of these pieces remain a part of his repertoire.

An example of ritual wedding music is a piece which Mischi refers to as "Do Barvinku" [for the wreath-making ceremony]. He explains that these pieces were sung to describe the various steps of each ritual, often with numerous verses. The job of the musician was to provide accompaniment to the singing. Mischi performs this piece in a rubato style.

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[71] A. I. Ivanytskii, "Muzyka Ukrains'koho vesillia" [Music of the Ukrainian wedding], in Vesil'ni pisni [Wedding songs] (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1982), p. 55.

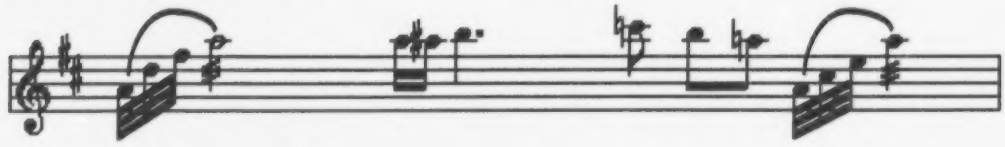
[72] Mischi, May, 1992.

The free rhythm imitates the way the piece would be sung.[73] The tonality is basically modal centred around D, however, the seventh step of this scale is often flattened and played in succession with the raised sixth, giving the impression that it occasionally fluctuates to G major. The seventh and third scale steps are often raised or lowered in order to match the direction of the melody.This fluctuation between minor and major tonalities is a common feature of Mischi's playing, especially when he performs improvised melodies. The rubato style allows for extensive use of tremolo throughout the piece. Arpeggios are also employed, often to outline the chordal structure of cadences.

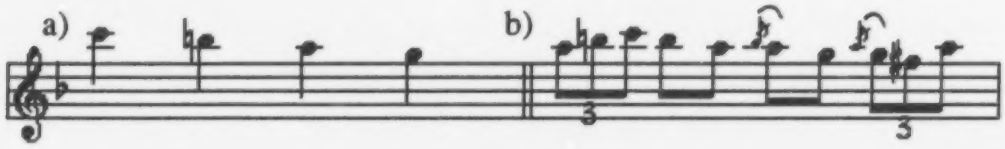
Figure 3: "Do Barvinku" [For the wreath-making ceremony]. As played by Nick Mischi.

[73] Ibid.

Another characteristic feature of Mischi's playing is his use of chromatic passing tones, most often in ascending melodic passages.



An additional ornamentation is Mischi's embellishment of a simple, descending quarter note passage by shifting movement off the beat with the use of eighth notes preceded by grace notes.



At the end of this piece Mischi adds a coda which modulates to the key of D major, and is played in a brisk, measured duple metre. He called this coda a *zakryshka* [literally, a spice or seasoning]. Mischi notes that every slow piece sung during the wedding ceremony was followed by some kind of up-tempo coda, "*shchoby zakryshyty chymos*'" [so as to spice it up with something]. The codas could be taken from a dance melody, a folk song, or occasionally they were improvisations.

Figure 4: Zakryshka [coda] to "Do Barvinku" [For the wreath-making ceremony], as played by Nick Mischi.

Another part of Nick Mischi's repertoire is a piece which was also played during wedding celebrations. This piece indicated a break in the festivities when people were lead to or from the banquet table. When

weddings were held in the home of the bride or groom's family, it was often not possible to feed all the guests at once. This music signalled one group leaving the table while another was being seated.

This piece is in G major, and its form is A A^1. Each section consists of twelve bars, with the second section actually a variant of the first. In contrast to the previous wedding music, this piece has a steady measured beat, which reflects its function as accompaniment to movement. Mischi also ends this piece with a coda or *zakryshka* . This coda consists of three sections, A, B, and C. The first two are eight bar phrases, first in G major, then modulating to the relative minor, while the third is a recapitulation of the original theme.

The predominant ornamental feature of this piece is the extensive use of grace notes. Mischi even included these when singing this melody.

Mischi recalls playing this piece both on tsymbaly and on trombone.[74] It was often enthusiastically received by the guests at weddings, offering the young musicians encouragement or a psychological "boost." Praise and recognition as a *pryrodnyi muzykant* [natural musician] was considered one of the highest compliments.[75]

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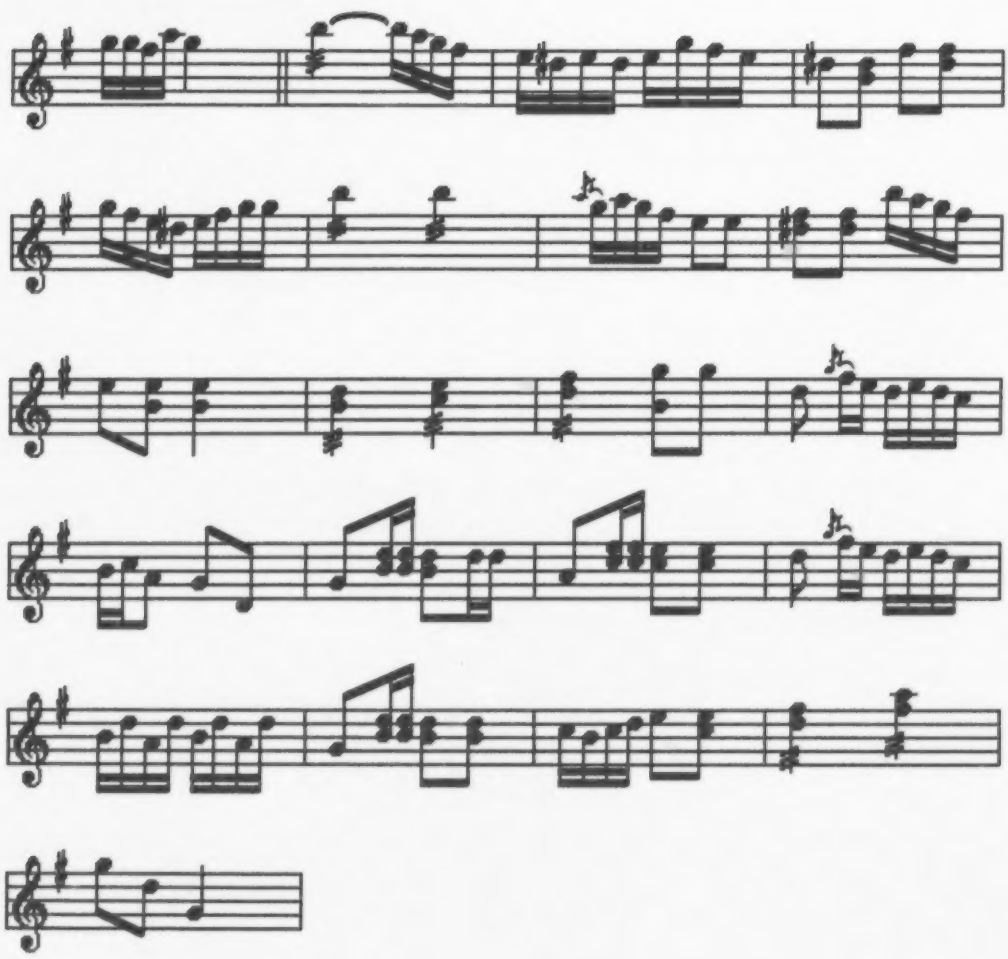
[74] Mischi's uncle taught him to play not only the tsymbaly, but the trombone and the double bass as well. He played these latter two in the expanded version of his uncle's band.

[75] Mischi, May, 1992.

Figure 5: "Music for movement to and from the wedding table," with *zakryshka* [coda], as played by Nick Mischi.

Figure 5: continued



Bill Malayko, although born in Canada, was also trained and performed at many three and four day wedding celebrations complete with ritual elements accompanied by traditional music. He still performs this music when it is requested by guests at a wedding, to accompany singing groups, or at staged presentations of Ukrainian wedding rituals.[76]

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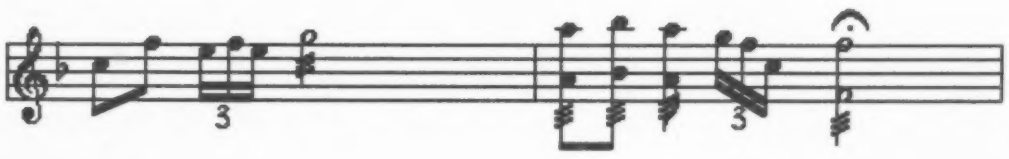
[76]Telephone interview with Bill Malayko, Brian Cherwick, June, 1992.

Malayko also performs a piece which is part of the wreath-making ceremony. As with the Mischi example, this piece is played in a rubato style, as would accompany singing.[77] Its tonality is also ambiguous, fluctuating between F major and a mode built on D.

The melody employs both E natural and E flat, emphasizing this shift. The notes are altered according to the direction in which the melody moves, raised in ascending patterns and lowered in descending patterns.

Malayko prolongs the harmonic ambiguity by harmonizing much of the melody at the octave. This fills out the sound while at the same time avoiding triadic harmony. Harmonizing at the octave is a common feature of much of Malayko's playing.[78]



[77] Recorded interview with Pearl Malayko, March, 1992. Malayko's wife, Pearl, sang the text to this piece as he played it.

[78] Chris Gargus states that Bill Malayko taught him the importance of using octave harmonies to enhance the sound of the instrument.

When triadic harmony is used, it is usually at a cadence in the major mode.

In order to prolong notes, Malayko uses the tremolo technique. However, his tremolo is not as evenly measured as Nick Mischi's, creating a freer, less defined rhythm.

Figure 6: "Music for wreath-making ceremony" as played by Bill Malayko

At the end of this piece, Malayko added a *zakryshka* or coda in triple metre. Although it is not similar musically, the text to this coda compliments the text of its preceding piece.

Figure 7: *Zakryshka* [coda] to "Music for wreath-making ceremony," as played by Bill Malayko.

Another similar piece is one that is played when the bride is leaving her parents' home. This is also modal, this time based on G, and is also played in a rubato style. Malayko again uses tremoli and harmony at the octave and third.

One technique used in this example, which also occurs in other pieces is the transposition of the melody by an octave, often in the middle of a phrase. This is sometimes done to accommodate notes, such as accidentals, which do not appear on the instrument in the octave the tsymbalist was performing in. At other times it is done to obtain notes which go beyond the range of the instrument. A third reason for this technique is to continue playing smoothly, without having to cross over to another bridge.

At the end of this piece Malayko played an eight bar, quick tempo coda in G major, similar to the *zakryshka* idea described by Nick Mischi. He said that this coda was developed by Metro Radomsky to liven up the ending of the piece.

When discussing ritual wedding music with younger generations of tsymbaly performers, it was found that this type of piece is not part of their repertoires. The rituals which were once accompanied by these pieces are no longer performed, except in isolated cases.[79] They had all performed several wedding marches, however none had ever performed them as the wedding couple marched to church or to a reception. The marches are now performed at the door of the hall where the reception is held as guests are entering, or during the presentation, when guests greet the bridal party and present them with gifts.

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[79] Nick Mischi was last asked to perform at a *vinkopletennia* [wreath-making] in 1975.

Figure 8: "Bride's Leaving," with *zakryshka* as played by Bill Malayko

4.4.2 Non-ritual song melodies

Many Alberta tsymbaly performers have added adaptations of folk song melodies to their repertoires. This is especially evident as performers search for new pieces to showcase on recordings and in contests.[80]

Nick Mischi recalls that arrangements of folk songs were popular even at the weddings and dances he performed at in Ukraine. At these functions they were often performed for people to listen to while they were eating. For those familiar with the texts, these songs had a special significance. After arriving in Canada, Mischi continued playing this type of piece, especially during solo performances on radio programs. During the 1930s he was featured on a Ukrainian radio program produced by Dr. Verchomin on C.J.C.A., where listeners often wrote in with requests for certain folk songs.[81]

One popular song that Mischi enjoys playing is "*Reve ta stohne Dnipr shyrokyi*" [The Mighty Dnieper Roars]. This melody was written by D. Kryzhanivs'kyi to the text of a poem by Taras Shevchenko.[82] Although originally a composed piece of music, its popularity has allowed it to cross over into the realm of folk song.

Mischi's version of this piece features many of the devices he used in the ritual wedding songs described above. Although it is somewhat more measured than the free rubato of the wreath-making melody, he still stretches the beat in several places in order to allow for arpeggios which

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[80] At the 1991 North-Central Alberta Radio Network Tsymbaly Contest two of the four finalists in the Open category played adaptations of folk songs.

[81] Mischi, May, 1992.

[82] Spivaie Ukrains'kyi narodnyi khor im. H. Veriovky [The Ukrainian folk choir named after H. Veriovka, sings] (Kyiv: Muzychna Ukraina, 1974), p. 100.

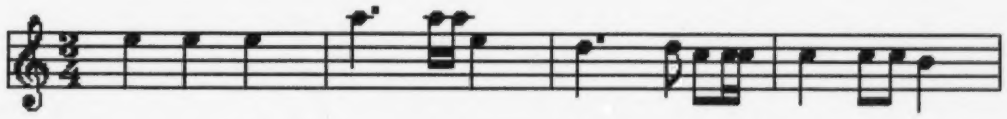
outline the harmony. Throughout the piece he harmonizes the melody in two-parts, generally in thirds, using tremoli to sustain the sound of longer duration notes. His interpretation is similar to the way a choral group would sing this song.

Figure 9: "Reve ta stohne Dnipr shyrokyi" [The Mighty Dnieper Roars], as played by Nick Mischi.

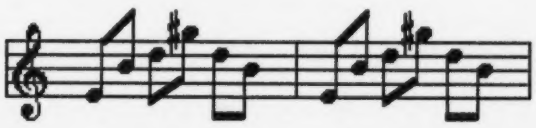
A contrasting interpretation of the same piece is given by Chris Gargus. He learned the melody of this song from his father. The fact that neither he nor his father knew the name of this piece, nor its composer, further emphasizes its position within the folk repertoire. He notes that this

type of piece is often performed during the presentation portion of a wedding reception. However, since Gargus's primary performance venues are dances, his version has been adapted for dancing. Rather than the free, singing style Mischi uses, this version adheres to a strict triple metre waltz rhythm.

Rather than treating long notes with a single stroke or a tremolo, Gargus sustains them by playing a variety of rhythms on each. This is a technique which is very common among Alberta tsymbaly performers. By injecting a myriad of extraneous rhythms into each piece, this technique increases the momentum of the music, which is more suitable for dancing..



Gargus also uses arpeggios to outline the harmonic structure of the piece. Rather than insert them throughout the melody as Mischi does, however, he uses them to fill in the "gaps" at the end of each phrase. As the final note of the phrase is sustained, Gargus plays various notes of the underlying chord, while maintaining a steady, rhythmic pulse.[83]



[83] Gargus himself referred to this technique as "filling in the gaps."

Figure 10: "Reve ta stohne Dnipr shyrokyi" [The Mighty Dnieper Roars], as played by Chris Gargus.

The use of a variety of rhythmic figures to sustain notes is a major component of the playing styles of Al and Albert Billey and Steven Chwok. Albert Billey recognizes Bill Semeniuk as one of the performers from whom he adapted this technique. Because of its effectiveness in maintaining harmonic and rhythmic interest, it has become a standard feature among other Alberta tsymbaly performers.

Another folk song which has become popular among Alberta tsymbalists is "*Rozpriahaite khloptsi koni* " (Harness [sic] The Horses).Al and Albert Billey perform this song as a tsymbaly duet,[84] and included it on their recorded album of tsymbaly duets.[85] In this version they use the rhythmic sustaining technique. A similar version of the same piece is performed by Steven Chwok. The similarity is perhaps due to the fact that he occasionally performs with the Billeys. Chwok's version features a very steady, measured tremolo, which he views as a measure of superior technique.[86] Chwok's influence on the Alberta tsymbaly community is evident when hearing several of his students perform this piece almost identically to the way he performs it himself.[87]

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[84] At the end of the 1991 North-Central Alberta Radio Network Tsymbaly contest, at which they both acted as judges, Al and Albert Billey performed this piece together as part of a showcase performance.

[85] "Harness The Horses" is the translation for side one, item four of "Dulcimer Magic" with Albert Billey and Albert Billey.

[86] Chwok.

[87] Chwok's student, Shane Gibson, performed this piece at the 1991 North-Central Alberta Radio Network Tsymbaly Contest.

Figure 11: "Rozpriahaite khlopsti koni" (Harness [sic] the Horses), as played by Al and Albert Billey.

Figure 12: "Rozpriahaite khloptsi koni" (Harness [sic] the Horses), as played by Steven Chwok.

It is interesting to note how various performers perceive the origins and functions of certain pieces differently. Both Nick Mischi and Chris Gargus perform versions of the folk song *"Tam na hori snih bilen'ky"* [On the Hill the Snow is White]. Mischi learned this piece before coming to Canada. He recognizes it as a popular song which many of his listeners enjoy singing, and therefore continues to perform it.

Gargus learned this same piece from his father while playing at weddings. The Gargus band plays this piece when the parents of the bride

and groom are greeting their children during the presentation ceremony. Chris Gargus feels that this piece is a component of the "traditional" music which should be performed during the presentation.[88] His views illustrate a new understanding of wedding tradition, or perhaps the development of a variant into an altogether new tradition.

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[88] Chris Gargus, May 13, 1992.

Figure 13: "Tam na hori snih bilen'kyi" [On the Hill the Snow is White], as played by Nick Mischi.

Figure 14: "Tam na hori snih bilen'kyi" [On the Hill the Snow is White], as played by Chris Gargus.

During a wedding at which the Gargus band performed, several instrumental versions and some sung versions of folk songs were performed during the presentation.[89] One of the songs performed was *"Chervona rozha troiaka"* [The Red Rose], the text of which deals with a drunken husband who beats his wife:

Chervona rozha troiaka (2X)	The three-fold red rose. (2X)
Mala ia muzha, muzha ia mala,	I had a husband, a husband had I,
Mala ia muzha, piiaka.	I had a husband who was a drunk.
Vin nits ne robyt', til'ke p'ie. (2X)	He does nothing but drink.(2X)
Pryide dodomu, dodomu pryide,	He comes home, home he comes,
Pryide dodomu, zhinku b'ie.	He comes home and beats his wife

Although this piece discusses the relationship between a husband and wife, the violent nature of the relationship makes it somewhat incongruous to sing at a wedding. The complete misunderstanding of song lyrics illustrates a decline in use and understanding of Ukrainian language within the Ukrainian community, and could explain the inclusion of this type of piece into a wedding celebration.

4.4.3 Dance music

The largest body of material performed by Alberta tsymbalists falls into the category of dance music, due to the fact that providing music for dances has become the most common venue for these performers. The majority of these pieces consist of polkas, waltzes and fox trots, many of which are not necessarily of Ukrainian origin. However, a number of

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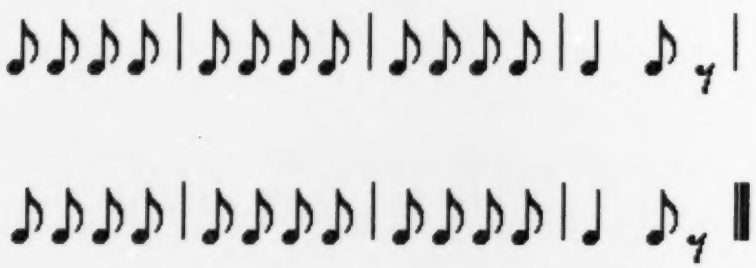
[89] Recorded performance of Peter Gargus and the "Swingsters," May 9, 1992.

melodies originally designed to accompany set dances are still often performed.

Perhaps the most popular dance melody performed by tsymbalists is *"Verkhovyno."* This piece was originally intended to accompany a trio dance by the same name.[90] Although the traditional dance has merged with others, the melody remains a favourite among tsymbalists.

"Verkhovyno" consists of two alternating sections: a slow, rubato introduction followed by a variation of a quick duple metre *kolomyika*. This *kolomyika* is defined by its characteristic rhythm, consisting of two fourteen beat phrases.[91]



It is perhaps these contrasts that account for the popularity of this piece. In it the performer can demonstrate the entire range of technical possibilities. The rubato opening allows for expressive playing complete with tremoli, chromatic flourishes, changes in dynamics and extended arpeggios. The *kolomyika* section is a showcase for the performer's

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[90] A. Nahachewsky, "First Existence Folk Dance Forms Among Ukrainians in Smoky Lake, Alberta and Swan Plain, Saskatchewan," M.A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1985, pp. 113-117.

[91] Andrii Humeniuk, "Khoreohrafichni ta muzychni osnovy tantsiuval'nykh pisen'" [Choreographic and musical foundations of dance songs], in ed.Dei, Tantsiuval'ni pisni [Dance songs], (Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1970), p. 54.

technical abilities combining the melodic, harmonic and percussive qualities of the instrument.

Nick Mischi employs several of his characteristic techniques in his performance of *Verkhovyno* In order to prolong the rhythmic ambiguity of the rubato passage as well as to add melodic interest, he inserts chromatic passing tones when approaching cadences.

Another technique Mischi uses could be considered a single-hand tremolo. This consists of several repeated strokes with the same hammer, allowing for smoother transition between notes.

Al Billey also uses the single-hand tremolo during his rubato section of *Verkhovyno* His reason for employing this technique is to free his left hand for damping previously struck strings.

[● indicates damping with hand]

Bill Malayko also uses a single-hand tremolo for some of the notes in his rubato introduction. He fills out the texture of his performance with octave doubling. Another feature of his performance is the inclusion of major arpeggios at the cadence, even though the piece is in a minor mode. This appears to have been a common feature of the playing of many of the older tsymbaly performers[92] This perhaps due to the fact that the tuning system used by these performers is missing some chromatic notes from each octave. In order to complete a phrase with an arpeggio, they substitute the more easily executed major chord for an awkward inversion of the expected minor chord.

Malayko also ends the *kolomyika* section with a similar major arpeggio.

Steven Chwok has recorded a version of *Verkhovyno* with his band "Prairie Pride."[93] Chwok's arrangement features a violin playing the melody of the rubato section, with Chwok providing accompaniment with tremolo chords. At the *kolomyika* section, the tsymbaly and violin play the melody together. This arrangement expands the *kolomyika* section beyond

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[92] Robert B. Klymasz, The Klymasz Collection (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies). Recordings of tsymbaly performers made by Robert Klymasz in 1963-65, presently in the collection of the Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, Hull, Quebec, notably KLY 35, c. 16-a, Track 1 and 2, Bill Grysiuk, Gilbert Plains, MB; and KLY 39, c. 20-b, Track 1, Alfred Frykas, Mink Creek, offer several examples of this phenomenon.

[93] "Prairie Pride/ Stepova Radist"," Pinacle Traditional Records P-1002, side one, item four, "Verkhovyno/ Alpine Meadows."

the regular eight-bar *kolomyika* melody, to include three additional sections which are often associated with this piece.[94]

Figure 15: "Verkhovyno," as played by Nick Mischi.

[94] A similar arrangement appears on a popular album from the 1960s, "D-Drifters-5 Play Ukrainian Dance Favourites," V Records, VLP-3029, side two, item four, "Ukrainian Kolomeyka."

Figure 15: Continued.

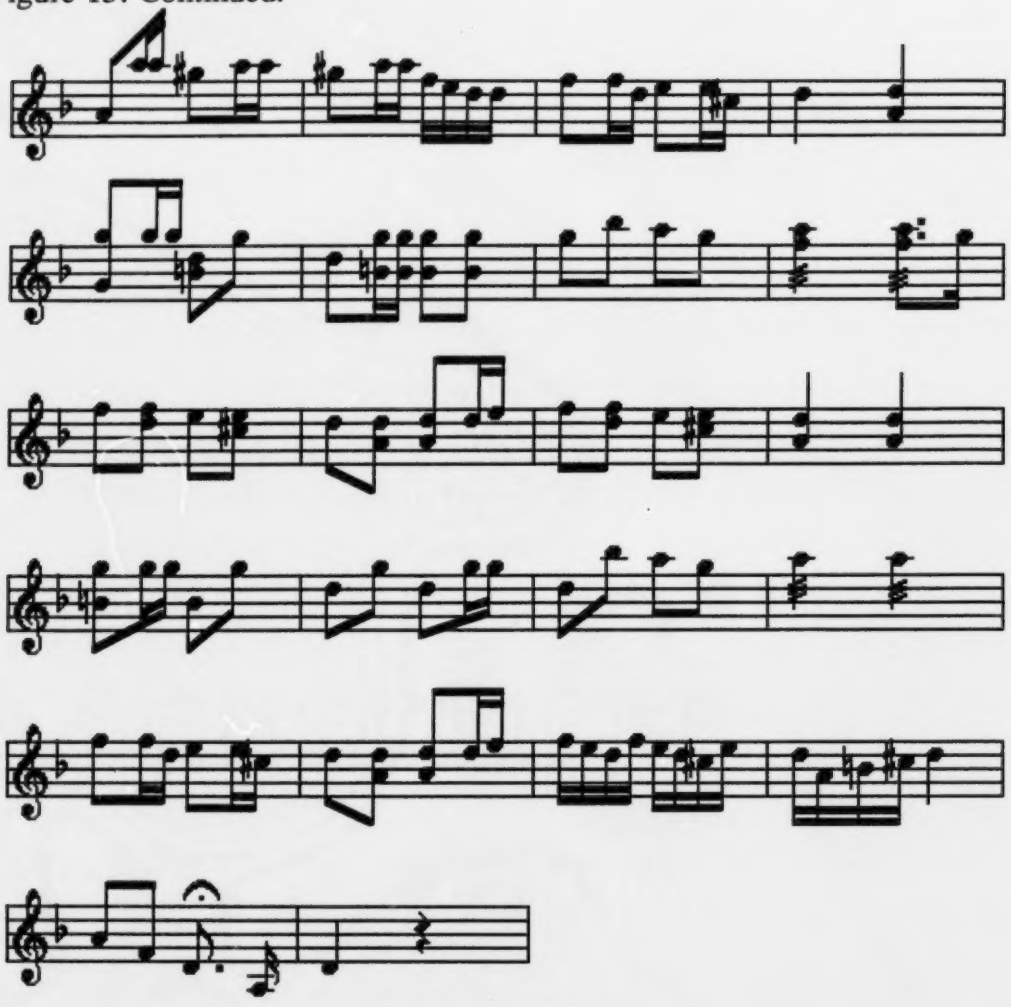


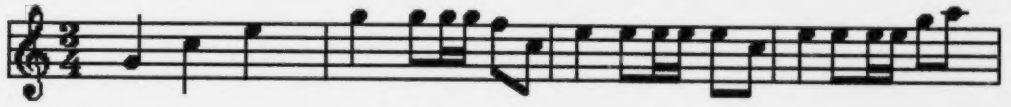
Figure 16: "Verkhovyno," as played by Al Billey.

Figure 17: "Verkhovyno," as played by Bill Malayko.

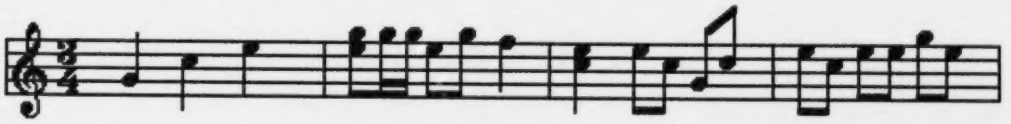
Figure 18: Kolomyika section of "Verkhovyno," as played by Steven Chwok.

Figure 18: Continued

Many other pieces have become so popular that they are now considered "standards" among the Alberta tsymbaly community. One such piece is the waltz *"Hlyboka kyrnytsia"* , which is commonly referred to as the "Wishing Well Waltz."Albert Billey performs a version of this waltz which provides a clear example of the technique of sustaining notes by playing a variety of rhythmic figures. Rather than holding half notes and dotted half notes, Billey repeatedly strikes the strings of these notes, providing additional rhythmic activity.



Chris Gargus also performs this piece, and also utilizes this rhythmic sustaining of notes. His treatment differs from Billey's in that he chooses to outline the harmony by utilizing more notes of the supporting chord.



Billey used the B section of this piece to illustrate the possible uses of chromatic passing tones. Gargus's arrangement used these passing tones only on the repeat of the B section.

The popularity of this piece was evident at the 1991 North Central Alberta Radio Network Tsymbaly Contest in Edmonton. At the point in the program when all of the competitors in the open class took to the stage to

perform together. This was the first piece they chose to play in unison. These tsymbalists, mostly former students of Steven Chwok or Chris Gargus, all performed the piece in a relatively similar fashion, attesting to it's universal acceptance.

Some of the older performers recall playing music for specific social dances such as the *hutsulka* and the *rumunka*. While once immensely popular, especially in the Willingdon, Alberta area, these dances are rarely requested anymore.[95]

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[95] Bill Malayko, March, 1992.

Figure 20: "Hlyboka kyrnytsia" [Wishing Well Waltz], as played by Albert Billey.

Figure 20: "Hlyboka kyrnytsia" [Wishing Well Waltz], as played by Chris Gargus.

Figure 20: Continued

4.5 Contemporary Performance Experiences

4.5.1 Weddings

For present day tsymbalists weddings provide the most common venue for performance. However, as the Ukrainian community in Alberta adapts to influences from the Canadian mainstream, many traditional elements of the wedding celebration are being replaced with contemporary customs. The three-day weddings complete with wreath-making ceremony, ritual blessings, and parties at the homes of the bride's and groom's families have been replaced by a church ceremony followed by a catered reception in a hall or hotel. Occasionally this is followed by a "fixer-upper,"[96] a post-wedding party where the bride and groom open their wedding gifts.

Only the older generation of tsymbalists appear to have been involved with playing music for traditional wedding rituals. Musicians such as Nick Mischi and Bill Malayko fondly recall playing at weddings which lasted up to five days.

Wedding celebrations were not always restricted to week-ends. Often weddings had to be held at a time when both a priest and a suitable band were available. In order to engage a popular band, such as the "Radomsky Orchestra," some families elected to begin their wedding festivities at mid-week. For the musicians this occasionally resulted in periods of up to two weeks of continuous playing.[97] This type of schedule often caused problems with those musicians who held alternate jobs. It also tended to portray the musician as an unreliable member of the community.[98]

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[96] Albert Billey, March, 1992.

[97] Bill Malayko, March, 1992.

[98] Pearl Malayko recalls that parents warned their daughters not to marry musicians because "they're never at home."

Although the musician may sometimes have been looked down upon as an individual, a good band was highly valued. Bill Malayko recalls that many families changed the proposed dates of their weddings if the "Radomsky Orchestra" was booked elsewhere for the same time.[99]

Presently, few weddings incorporate the full range of traditional rituals. Occasionally some families decide to include some of these traditional elements, however it is still the older generation of musicians who are hired for these events, perhaps because only they are fully familiar with the necessary music.[100]

Even contemporary style weddings have components which call for "traditional" music. When guests arrive at the reception they are often greeted near the entrance by the wedding party and the parents of the bride and groom. At this time the musicians also perform near the entrance to the hall.[101] The music generally consists of up-tempo pieces, often including the wedding "marches" which were at one time played as the bride and groom marched to and from church.

Another component left over from traditional weddings is the presentation. Traditionally this was the point where the bride and groom were presented with items necessary for setting up their new household.[102] Today this involves the guests greeting the wedding party and parents and

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[99] Bill Malayko, March, 1992.

[100] Bill Malayko, Bill Semeniuk, and Metro Lastiwka all noted that until Metro Radomsky's retirement in 1989, the Radomsky Orchestra was most often called to perform at weddings involving traditional rituals.

[101] Steven Chwok recalls his initial fascination with tsymbaly grew from watching musicians playing at the door of a wedding reception.

[102] Volodymyr Shukhevych, Hutsulshchyna, part 3, in Materialy do Ukrains'ko-rus'oi etnol'ogii, 5 (Lviv: Naukovo tovarystvo im. Shevchenka, 1902), p. 53. Shukhevych notes that in some cases in Ukraine, gifts were piled so high on the table that the bride could not be seen from behind them.

presenting the couple with gifts, or more often money. The music performed usually consists of arrangements of folk song melodies.[103]

The remainder of the wedding reception is filled with music for dancing. The number of Ukrainian pieces performed may vary according to the nature of the audience. Bands are now expected to play a variety of musical styles encompassing everything from old-time to contemporary "Top-40" pop music. In some cases the tsymbaly players switch to other instruments[104] while at other times they adapt the tsymbaly to all musical styles.[105]

It is interesting to note that although musicians are increasingly required to play non-Ukrainian music during wedding dances, there are many families who will not hire a band that does not include tsymbaly. Some bands that do not usually include a tsymbalist will often hire one in order to secure these bookings.[106] Alberta bands that do have tsymbaly are occasionally hired for weddings as far away as Thompson, Manitoba[107] and Prince George, B.C.[108]

4.5.2 Stage wedding

A survival of some of the ritual wedding music exists as part of staged presentations of Ukrainian weddings. These presentations attempt to

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[103] Chris Gargus, May 13, 1992.

[104] Al Billey and Steven Chwok also play the saxophone, Albert Billey the guitar and Chris Gargus the drums.

[105] Nick Mischi and Bill Malayko usually only play the tsymbaly during the course of a wedding or dance.

[106] All six informants in this study have performed as substitutes with other bands at some time.

[107] Bill Malayko, March, 1992.

[108] Albert Billey, March, 1992.

portray the various stages of a wedding celebration as they may have occurred among Ukrainians in Canada. These amateur productions are largely based on volunteer input and therefore often mix traditions from various regions of Ukraine.[109]

4.5.3 Dances

Although less common than they were at one time, bands featuring tsymbaly are still popular at dances. Ukrainian bands continue to perform at functions such as the pre-lenten *pushchenia*,[110] or even the church feast day.[111] As well, they are hired for an entire range of newer functions such as seasonal dances and weekly dances sponsored by seniors and singles clubs Many of the bands regularly play on a circuit of such clubs throughout Edmonton and East-central Alberta.

Groups promoting dances featuring a Ukrainian theme will often strive to hire a band with tsymbaly. Albert Billey's band "The Northern Kings," has been hired several times by a Ukrainian club in Yellowknife, N.W.T. to perform for a Ukrainian New Year's dance or *Malanka* .[112]

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[109] Bill Malayko, June, 1992. Malayko performed at a staged wedding in Smoky Lake, Alberta in August, 1992. Another similar presentation is staged annually at Canada's National Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin, Manitoba and is featured in a video production, "Ukrainian Wedding" (Calgary: Lifestyle Home Video, 1987).

[110] For example, Albert Billey's band, "The Northern Kings," performed at a *pushchenia* at the Balwin Community Centre in March, 1992.

[111] Ron "The Fiddler" Boychuk and his band, which includes tsymbalist Irene Chamczuk, performed at a picnic in conjunction with the feast day of Saints Peter and Paul Church in Mundare, Alberta, July, 1991.

[112] Albert Billey, March, 1992.

4.5.4 Contests

A unique and more recent context for performance is the tsymbaly contest. The first competition was held in Lakeview, Alberta in 1967, and the popularity of this event encouraged the development of several others.[113] Tsymbaly playing competitions had previously been a component of amateur music competitions at Ukrainian festivals such as the National Ukrainian Festival in Dauphin, Manitoba and the Pysanka Festival in Vegreville, Alberta.[114] The more recent contests, such as those sponsored by C.F.C.W. Radio of Camrose, Alberta or the North Central Alberta Radio Network of Westlock, Alberta are unique in that they focus solely upon tsymbaly.[115]

The tsymbaly competitions are modeled after old-time fiddle contests.[116] Since tsymbaly styles are less-defined, competitors are usually allowed to perform any two pieces of music, however they are encouraged choose contrasting selections. Competitors are generally grouped according to age, while some contests include a special category for novelty performance.[117] In many cases the competition is followed by a dance, with music provided by a band featuring tsymbaly.[118]

These contests are largely responsible for a renaissance of interest in tsymbaly playing throughout east-central Alberta. The first competitions

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113 Recorded interview with Bill Semeniuk, Brian Cherwick, June, 1992. Semeniuk was the champion at this first tsymbaly contest.

114 Mark Jaroslav Bandera. "The Western Canadian Championships: Tsymbaly Competitions at the Red Barn." Canadian Folk Music Journal 11 (1983) p. 29.

115 Ibid.

116 Tompkins.

117 Bill Semeniuk has won novelty competitions playing tsymbaly that have been covered with a towel so that the performer cannot see the strings..

118 Bandera, "Western Canadian Championships," p. 29.

attracted most of the well-known and experienced performers. At the same time they offered younger performers an opportunity to test their skills and the chance to win cash prizes. While the older performers were eager to legitimize their status as carriers of Ukrainian tradition, a fierce competition developed between many of the younger competitors. As they achieved success at contests, performers such as Steven Chwok and Chris Gargus developed a network of students, who were also encouraged to enter contests.[119]

Apart from the cash prizes, prestige seems to be the prime motivating factor in striving to win one of the big contests. Many tsymbaly performers continue to list their past victories when promoting themselves. This is effectively put to use in selling record albums. "A Father and His Sons in Ukrainian Music and Song" featuring Al Billey[120], "Peter Gargus and the Swingsters" featuring Chris Gargus[121], and "Steven Chwok Presents His Finest Dulcimer Youth"[122] all advertise the fact that their tsymbaly performers were former champions of the C.F.C.W. competitions, while "Ukrainian Comedy Songs and Music with the Northern Kings: Home, Home on the Farm" featuring Albert Billey[123] includes a piece entitled "Award Winning Dulcimer Polka No. 2." In fact, the C.F.C.W. Tsymbaly Contest itself was the focus of one Heritage Records album.[124]

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119 Chwok, Chris Gargus, May 13, 1992.
120 "A Father and His Sons in Ukrainian Music and Song," Heritage Records, HR-18.
121 "Peter Gargus and the Swingsters," World Records, WRC1-3538.
122 "Steven Chwok Presents His Finest Dulcimer Youth," Heritage Records, HR-48
123 "Ukrainian Comedy Songs and Music with the Northern Kings, Home, Home on the Farm," Heritage Records, HR-27.
124 "Award Winning Dulcimer Sounds," Heritage Records, HR-16.

In recent years the frequency of tsymbaly contests has declined. Although the contests are still popular with audiences, it has become increasingly difficult to attract performers. The 1991 North Central Alberta Radio Network Tsymbaly Contest, held in October at an Edmonton hotel, attracted an audience of several hundred, yet only four competitors registered for the Open category, which featured the largest prizes.[125] The established performers no longer participate because as past winners they have already proven themselves. They also question the credentials of adjudicators, believing that if all the best tsymbalists compete there is no one qualified to judge their performances.[126] The younger performers are discouraged by the fact that a small circle of more accomplished players often finish at the top of every contest.[127]

Contest organizers are discouraged by the lack of interest on the part of the performers. Some have suggested abandoning the contest format in favour of a tsymbaly showcase, where several of the top musicians would be invited to perform in a non-competitive atmosphere.[128]

4.5.5 Festivals

Ukrainian festivals have also provided a venue to showcase tsymbaly music. As mentioned previously, the Ukrainian festivals at Dauphin,

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125 First prize in the Open category of this contest included an all expense paid trip to Winnipeg and a complete recording session at a studio run by Baba's Records, a Ukrainian label.

126 Albert Billey, March, 1992; Bill Malayko, March, 1992.

127 Recent frequent contest prize winners include Irene Chamczuk , a former student of Chris Gargus, and Shane Gibson and Wade Wasylciw, students of Steven Chwok.

128 Robert J. Tompkins of the North Central Alberta Radio Network and Ken Huculak, formerly of C.F.C.W. Radio and president of Heritage Records, have both suggested the showcase format.

Manitoba and Vegreville, Alberta both feature amateur music competitions which include tsymbaly categories. These festivals also feature tsymbaly performers as part of their Grandstand entertainment. Steven Chwok and his band "Prairie Pride" were one of the headline acts at the 1990 Dauphin Festival, while the "Tsymbaly Trio" comprised of Chwok, Al and Albert Billey performed at Vegreville's Festival in 1988. Other Ukrainian events such as the Ukrainian pavilion at Edmonton's Heritage Day Festival or stage presentations at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village east of Edmonton also frequently feature tsymbaly performers.[129]

Tsymbaly performances are often part of non-Ukrainian festivals. Most small towns in east-central Alberta hold community fairs which include parades and dances. Many of the parade floats sponsored by Ukrainian businesses feature live music performed by bands which often include tsymbaly.[130] In towns where there is a large Ukrainian population, a Ukrainian band is often hired for the dance held in conjunction with the fair.

Tsymbaly are occasionally featured at non-Ukrainian events of a grander scale. Al Billey performed with his tsymbaly as a member of the Christian rock group "Fairweather Forecast" during the Canada Summer Games in Lethbridge[131].

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[129] In 1991, groups featuring tsymbaly were part of the "Razom '91," "Ukrainian Day," and "Friend's Ukrainian Amateur Music Festival" programs, all held at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, east of Edmonton.

[130] Bill Malayko and Bill Semeniuk regularly perform on floats during small town parades.

[131] Al Billey.

4.5.6 Recordings

Recordings of Ukrainian music, including tsymbaly, were among the first ethnic recordings to be commercially produced in North America.[132] Tsymbaly have been featured on recordings by Alberta bands since the late 1940s and early 1950s. At that time groups such as the "John Zelisko Orchestra," the " Radomsky Trio" with tsymbalist Metro Lastiwka, and the "Easy Aces" with tsymbalist Kost Esak recorded material in Edmonton that was later released on 78 R.P.M. discs on the Stinson label [133]

In the 1960s, 78 and 33 R.P.M. records featuring Alberta bands such as the "Easy Aces," "Metro Radomsky and his Orchestra," and the "Peter Kassian Trio" were recorded by C.F.C.W. Radio in Camrose and released on DSF and DSLP Records, distributed through the Ukrainian Bookstore in Edmonton.

Canada's largest producer of western Canadian Ukrainian records is V Records of Winnipeg. Although most of the artists on the V label are natives of Manitoba, some Alberta groups were also featured, including the "Easy Aces."[134]

Perhaps the largest distributor of records featuring Alberta tsymbaly performers is Heritage Records of Edmonton. The label was established in the late 1960s by Kenneth Huculak in partnership with some local Ukrainian musicians.[135] By the late 1980s the label had produced over 60 albums of Ukrainian music, many of which highlighted the tsymbaly.

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[132]Richard K. Spottswood, "Commercial Ethnic Recordings in the United States," in Ethnic Recordings in America: A Neglected Heritage, American Folklife Center, Studies in American Folklife 1 (Washington: Library of Congress, 1982), pp.60-61.

[133] Lastiwka.

[134] "Best of the Easy Aces," V Records, VLP 3008.

[135]Recorded interview with Ken Huculak, Brian Cherwick May, 1991.

All six subjects of this study have released record albums with a variety of bands. Each has been featured on at least one Heritage Records album, as well as on albums produced either by other record companies or independently by the artists themselves.[136]

4.6 Education

One of the clearest ways of determining if a piece of music is actually "folk" music is the manner in which it is transmitted. Information which is passed on through oral transmission can be considered folklore.[137] According to this definition, the tsymbaly tradition in Alberta is truly a "folk" tradition.

Although many of Alberta's established tsymbaly performers have taught students, their instruction occurs largely by example. There still exists a traditional one-to-one relationship between the teacher and the student. The student learns technique and pieces by rote following the example of the instructor.

The oldest generation of performers have been active in training some students. Nick Mischi has offered assistance to many prospective young tsymbaly players, while Bill Malayko was responsible for offering Chris Gargus some of his earliest instruction. While the next generation has been somewhat less active in this area, Al Billey has assisted two students, one of whom has been successful in some tsymbaly competitions.

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136 See "Discography" for a more detailed list of Alberta tsymbaly recordings.

137 Bruno Nettl, An Introduction to Folk Music in the United States (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960), p. 3.

By far the most prolific instructors of tsymbaly in Alberta have been Steven Chwok and Chris Gargus. Between them, they have been responsible for guiding most of the youngest generation of tsymbaly performers. As mentioned previously, their students have gone on to achieve success in contests, as members of bands, and as soloist and recording artists.

It is interesting to note that unlike the present tsymbaly tradition in Ukraine, no instructional materials for tsymbaly have been prepared in Alberta.[138] Some of the instructors prepare primitive tablature versions of folk songs as guides for their students, but none of these have yet been consolidated into an instructional manual. Only one tsymbaly method book, prepared by an instructor from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, is presently available for sale at the Ukrainian Bookstore in Edmonton.[139] Printed music does not exist for the advanced player, perhaps because many do not read music.

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[138] Nezovybat'ko, Shkola hry; D. Popichuk, Kontsertni tvory; Tsymbaly: 1 vypusk uchbovyi repertuar I-II kursiv muzychnykh uchylyshch (Kyiv: Muzychna Ukraina, 1987); Tsymbaly: 1-3 klasy dytiachoi muzychnoi shkoly (Kyiv: Muzychna Ukraina, 1984); Tsymbaly: 4-5 klasy dytiachoi muzychnoi shkoly (Kyiv: Muzychna Ukraina, 1985).

[139] B. Rychlo, Tsymbaly: Hammered Dulcimer (n.p., 1990).

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

While the tsymbaly playing tradition in east-central Alberta continues to be a vibrant expression of Ukrainian culture, it is nonetheless undergoing tremendous change. It is a common belief that the tsymbaly's traditional role is strictly one of accompanist to instruments such as the violin, and that its current prominence represents a recent development.[1] In fact, the tsymbaly has played more than a supporting role in folk ensembles for most of this century.[2] Among tsymbalists in Alberta, there appears to be a higher regard for those musicians who are able to perform both solo and accompaniment parts than for those who merely execute chordal accompaniments.[3]

In recent years there has been a trend toward tsymbaly becoming the featured solo instrument within ensembles. It is perhaps the tsymbaly functioning as a symbol of Ukrainian identity which has helped define this new, more prominent role. For the most part, the musicians concerned are not consciously striving to displace other instruments in order to dominate the spotlight. They are merely attempting to stretch their own boundaries as performers, while at the same time redefining the performance

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[1] Mark Jaroslav Bandera, The Tsymbaly Maker and His Craft, Canadian Series in Ukrainian Ethnology 1 (Edmonton: Huculak Chair of Ukrainian Culture and Ethnography amd Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1991), pp.12-13.

[2] Nick Mischi, recorded interview, Brian Cherwick, May, 1992. Mischi notes that he has always alternated between accompaniment and solo roles in bands throughout his performing career. Stanislaw Mierczynski, Muzyka Huculszczyzny (Cracow: Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, 1965), includes transcriptions of melodic tsymbaly parts collected in Ukraine between 1934-38.

[3] All six informants indicated that they felt performers who merely executed chordal accompaniments were inferior to those who could combine both melodic and harmonic parts.

possibilities of their instruments.[4] For their audiences, however, the role of the tsymbaly in a band, and in Ukrainian society in general has become increasingly important. For many, the tsymbaly has become the embodiment of western Canadian Ukrainian music.[5] For most aficionados of tsymbaly music, the performer's ability to play an intricate "lead' melody is of primary importance.[6]

Much of the traditional repertoire for tsymbaly has survived to the present but as community activities and rituals change, the tsymbaly performer has had to adapt. Many traditional rituals, such as components of the wedding which involve specific music, are no longer functional within the community. Fortunately, many of the younger musicians are recognizing the richness of this music and are reviving some of these pieces for their absolute value.[7]

The older generations of performers are eager to pass on their knowledge to younger musicians. It is through the efforts of players such as Nick Mischi, Bill Malayko and others of their generation that there are skilled young tsymbalists, such as Steven Chwok and Chris Gargus, interested in continuing this tradition, and who are, in turn, educating students of their own.

In order for a tradition to remain vibrant it must continue to evolve. The tsymbaly tradition in Alberta is evolving as performers test new

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[4]Nick Mischi, Albert Billey and Steven Chwok all felt that playing strictly accompaniments would be artistically limiting and boring for the performer.

[5]Robert B. Klymasz, "'Sounds You Never Before Heard:' Ukrainian Country Music in Western Canada," Ethnomusicology 16, no. 3, 1972, pp. 372-380.

[6]Recorded interview with Robert J. Tompkins, Brian Cherwick, November, 1991.

[7] Recorded interview with Steven Chwok, Brian Cherwick, May, 1992. Chwok has been studying old 78 R.P.M. recordings of artists such as John Dlugosz in order to revive some of the repertoire which is no longer being played by other tsymbalists.

repertoire and performance practices. They are redefining the visual image of tsymbalist by developing various instrument stands, while at the same time reshaping the auditory image by experimenting with hammers, strings, tunings, and electronic sound reinforcement.

The demand for tsymbaly music within the Ukrainian community of Alberta has remained constant. Although some of the more traditional contexts for this music have disappeared, they have been replaced with new ones such as radio programs, folk festivals and tsymbaly competitions. As tsymbaly performers continue to become involved in projects such as adding the sound of tsymbaly to the large symphonic orchestras which accompany staged Ukrainian dancing, or incorporating tsymbaly into non-Ukrainian musical styles, they will bring the instrument to the attention of an ever increasing audience. However, as long as tsymbaly continue to be featured in small ensembles providing music for community events, there will remain a link to the tsymbaly traditions of the past.

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VITA

Brian Anthony Cherwick

Date of Birth: June, 8, 1960

Post-Secondary Education:

1980-85: Bachelor of Music (Education), Brandon University, Brandon, Manitoba.

1987-88: Special student at Kyiv Conservatoire of Music named after Peter Illych Tchaikovsky, Kyiv, Ukraine.

Related Experience:

1992: Director of Ukrainian folk music ensemble "Vivat"; Chairman, Ukrainian Amateur Music Festival, Friends of the Ukrainian Village Society.

1985-87, 1988-90: Music Director, St. Vladimir's College, Roblin, Manitoba.

1981-89: Conductor, arranger, Hoosli Ukrainian Folk Ensemble, Winnipeg, Manitoba, O. Koshetz Choir, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Rusalka Ukrainian Dance Ensemble, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

1975-92: Freelance musician, writer, arranger, adjudicator and clinician.

Awards:

1991-92: Province of Alberta Graduate Scholarship; Department of Slavic and East European Studies 75th Anniversary Scholarship; St. John's Institute Scholarship in Memory of Samuel F. Woloshyn; Cardinal Josyf Slipyj Ukrainian Studies Scholarship.

1990-91: Ivan Franko Scholarship in Ukrainian Folklore; Cardinal Josyf Slipyj Ukrainian Studies Scholarship.